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**Settlement, Livelihoods and Identity in Southern Tanzania:
A Comparative History of the Ngoni and Ndendeuli**

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Abstract

The focus of the thesis is a comparative history of two neighbouring ethnic groups in Songea District and their agroecological environments: the Ngoni, a branch of the *Mfecane* migrations from South Africa which dominated southern Tanzania in the late nineteenth century; and the Ndendeuli, one of numerous indigenous groups that were created by partial incorporation into the expanding Ngoni State. Under British Indirect Rule, the egalitarian, stateless Ndendeuli were ruled by authoritarian Ngoni Native Authorities, and the character of the two ethnic groups diverged, with the Ndendeuli enthusiastically adopting tobacco production, and Islam, while rejecting the European Christianity that had taken hold among the Ngoni. As the colonial economy developed, Europeans characterised the Ngoni as conservative and indolent – a ‘deteriorating tribe’ – while the Ndendeuli were increasingly recognised as industrious and progressive. These representations informed divergent patterns of intervention including coercive agricultural programmes for the Ngoni and forced resettlement of the Ndendeuli. In the early 1950s, a successful campaign for Ndendeuli self-rule emerged, which quickly transformed into mass support for TANU while their Ngoni counterparts allied with European interests. Despite forty years of nationalism, ethnic tensions between the Ngoni and Ndendeuli were sustained by a District Council and Cooperative Union which straddled the two regions, until July 2002 when Songea District was divided into two along a ‘fault-line’ that can be traced back to pre-colonial social and spatial organisation.

The starting point for analysis is the insight that Ndendeuli is the frontier of Ungoni, with a rapidly increasing population and unstable pattern of settlement and land use that developed in a region of indeterminate political and moral authority. The thesis examines how the people who became known as Ndendeuli created their society and culture out of the materials of a shared frontier experience, under economic, ecological and sociological conditions common to innumerable internal frontiers throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. In doing so, the thesis adapts Kopytoff’s model of ethnogenesis and social change given in *The African Frontier*. The discussion explores the extent to which Ndendeuli history can be seen as an endogenous movement to build a new society in opposition to that found at the Ngoni centres of power. An interdisciplinary methodology was employed including sequenced historical mapping of settlement patterns, political organisation and land use; archival research, oral histories and interviews; participatory appraisal techniques and participant observation. The thesis is structured both thematically and chronologically, exploring in turn: pre-colonial settlement, political control and ethnic identity; colonial administration and the politics of representation; colonial religious identities and educational opportunities; the cultural economy of cash crop production; settlement and resettlement; and post-War political reform and resistance. The conclusions show how long-term settlement dynamics can offer new ways to frame and understand rural development trajectories and ethnic identities in other African districts.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

AC	Area Commissioner
ANR	Agricultural Notes of Reference
AO	Agricultural Officer
BRALUP	Bureau of Resource Assessment and Land Use Planning, UDSM
CCM	Chama Cha Mapinduzi
CS	Chief Secretary to the Governor
DC	District Commissioner
DED	District Executive Director
DEO	Divisional Executive Officer
DO	District Officer
DPO	District Political Officer
DFID	Department for International Development, UK
EAC	East Africana Collection, UDSM
GM	General Manager
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
H/O	Handing Over
IRA	Institute of Resource Assessment, UDSM
JFM	Joint Forest Management
MP	Member of Parliament
MR	Monthly Report of Agricultural Officer
n.d.	no date
Ngomat	Ngoni Matengo Cooperative Marketing Union Limited
NMCMU	Ngoni Matengo Cooperative Marketing Union Limited
OSB	Order of Saint Benedict
PC	Provincial Commissioner
PLUM	Participatory Land Use Management
RC	Regional Commissioner
RDA	Ruvuma Development Association (1963-1969)
RH	Rhodes House, Oxford
RUDA	Ruvuma Development Association (2000-)
SAP	Suggested Agriculture Programme
SD	Safari Diary of Agricultural Officer
SDA	Songea District Archives, Department of Agriculture
SDAR	Songea District Annual Report
SDAAR	Songea District Agriculture Annual Report
SDB	Songea District Book
SEC	Secretariat file
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SODA	Songea Development Action
TANRIC	Tanzania Natural Resources Information Centre
TANU	Tanganyikan African National Union
TNA	Tanzanian National Archives
Tsh	Tanzanian shilling
TYL	TANU Youth League
UDSM	University of Dar es Salaam
UMCA	United Mission to Central Africa
VEO	Village Executive Officer
WEO	Ward Executive Officer
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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Patterns and Trends in African Agrarian Societies

The focus of this thesis is a history of two neighbouring ethnic groups in Songea District: the Ngoni, a branch of the *Mfecane* migrations from South Africa which dominated southern Tanzania in the late nineteenth century; and the Ndendeuli, one of numerous indigenous groups that were incorporated into the expanding Ngoni State. My starting point is the insight that, over the course of the twentieth century, Ndendeuli society emerged on the frontier of Ngoni society, with a rapidly increasing population and unstable pattern of settlement and land use, in a region of indeterminate political and moral authority. The thesis examines how the people who came to be known as Ndendeuli created a society and culture out of the materials of this shared frontier experience. It emerges that Ndendeuli history was closely linked to processes unfolding at historical centres of power in neighbouring Ngoni society. In order to explore this dynamic relationship, the structure of the thesis is based upon a comparative history of the two ethnic groups and their agroecological environments.

From Political Ecology to Comparative History

The original agenda for this study was quite different, yet the questions that prompted it were retained throughout the course of research. Originally, my aim was to study the patterns, causes and consequences of environmental change in Songea District over a 100-year period. This was to be an end in itself, as well as a way to mediate between competing official and local constructions of the relationship between African farmers and their environments. The aim was to propose 'counter narratives' for insertion into the policy process. The project was strongly influenced by a new generation of scholarship on political ecology and environmental history which appeared in the 1990s, in particular Fairhead and Leach's study *Misreading the African Landscape* (1996). This body of literature challenged the prevailing neo-Malthusian orthodoxy of a vicious cycle of widespread environmental degradation driven

by poverty, population growth, destructive farming practices, and unfavourable economic and political relations. Through my work in Songea District I hoped to build on Fairhead and Leach's interdisciplinary agenda, combining elements of environmental history, social anthropology and human geography. In retrospect I was implicitly seeking to strengthen the argument for a broadly populist interpretation of contemporary participatory development paradigms.

After four months of fieldwork, while accompanying the District Participatory Land Use Management (PLUM) team on a two-week village level planning exercise, I was passed a copy of a report on the environmental impact of the tobacco industry in Songea District (Geist 1996). Smallholder tobacco production in Songea is heavily concentrated in the eastern half of the District, among the predominantly Ndendeuli population, while the Ngoni, living to the west of Songea town, produce relatively little. At this time, I had assumed the skewed distribution to be a consequence of ecological differences, perhaps soil types, or simply a reflection of tobacco industry policy. For me, the industry was an example of how local cultivators are exploited by inequitable economic relations with international capital that locked them into unsustainable mining of soil and forest. I had aimed to show how local efforts to initiate alternative sustainable livelihood strategies, including organic farming, were systematically suppressed by the overlapping interests of the state, and tobacco and fertiliser companies. In doing so I would be working in a tradition of political ecology with its origins in Blaikie's seminal work *The Political Economy of Soil Erosion in Developing Countries* (Blaikie 1985). Yet Geist's report opened up a far more intriguing perspective:

There is a persistent line of arguing that tobacco cultivation might be more related to tribal or ethnic attitudes than to any other, i.e. ecological, political or economic factors. Since due to their flexible, non-hierarchical societal organization, Ndendeuli were considered to be more receptive towards new agricultural methods, while Ngoni were regarded as lazy, stubborn, uncooperative and slow in grasping new developments (Geist 1996:18).

On asking my colleagues on the PLUM team whether this was 'true', I unwittingly started a lively debate on Ngoni 'laziness' and Ndendeuli 'progressiveness', and realised that I had stumbled upon 'something that mattered'. Further inquiries revealed that these stereotypes are often held by Ngoni and Ndendeuli alike, and have persisted for decades. In 1954 the Government Sociologist, P.H. Gulliver, wrote of the Songea Ngoni:

Whether one surveys their agriculture, their housing, their diet, their standards of life or their ceremonial, one finds only a depressing poverty of ideas and ambition and an equally depressing resignation to its perpetuation. At heart, it is largely a moral and psychological matter. Further, one can but

make invidious comparison with the waMatengo who have the same polyglot origin, or the Ndendeuli who have been rather less Ngoni-ised than other groups; both of these peoples have escaped the deadweight of Ngoni tradition in modern times, both are more inclined to individual effort without vainly groping for lost leadership and a lost sense of ability and moral fibre (Gulliver 1954:116).

These striking stereotypes can be linked to the divergent responses of Ngoni and Ndendeuli to a history of numerous innovations and interventions in the region. Apart from willingness to grow tobacco, responses to Indirect Rule, world religions, agricultural campaigns, late-colonial administrative reforms, the nationalist movement, resettlement programmes, and, most recently, the Village Level Planning in which I was a participant observer, all appeared to provide evidence that the Ngoni were conservative and Ndendeuli were progressive. For most of Songea history, this pattern was explained in terms of a tribal model of African society whereby the stereotypes were essential characteristics of each group and had their roots in ancient 'tribal customs', and ultimately for many in genetic composition. Elements of this model persist in popular and official consciousness, and even in some scholarship in the form of analyses that rely on a vague notion of 'culture'. Its persistence throughout successive administrations and shifts in intellectual understandings of African society can be linked to continuities in the discourses, practices and institutions of modern government, which set up a dichotomy between developed and underdeveloped, tradition and modernity, state and society. Thus, compliance or non-compliance with interventions designed to entice, persuade or coerce rural Africans into the modern world is reinterpreted as responsive progressivism or stubborn conservatism. My preoccupation with the narrative linking ethnicity and development led me to recast the thesis as an attempt to explore representation and reality in the two societies. By examining official and local constructions of Ngoni conservatism and Ndendeuli progressivism as part of a comparative history of the two regions, I hoped to introduce a new dimension which cross-cuts the duality between 'official' and 'local' discourses found in many political ecology studies. Such an approach offered a way to deconstruct and understand enduring representations of the 'conservative African farmer' by examining how some ethnic groups were considered 'better' or 'worse' than others. It may also help us to understand the logic of interventions justified by these constructions, and their material impacts on the livelihoods of African farmers.

Divergent Trajectories at the Frontier and Metropole

The two Ngoni Chiefdoms in Songea District – Mshope and Njelu – were ruled by two related royal families of immigrant warriors from South Africa, and their descendents, who

settled near present-day Songea town in the middle of the nineteenth century (see Maps 1 to 4). The chiefdoms expanded rapidly over the coming 40 years through incorporation of captives from surrounding populations who were resettled in numerous communities under varying degrees of political control throughout south-west Tanzania. Of these settlements, the Ndendeuli to the east and the Matengo to the west formed significant minorities within the boundaries of Songea District when they were established after German colonial conquest in 1897. German Benedictine missionaries began their operations in the heart of the larger Ngoni Chiefdom, Njelu, in the following year, and gradually brought the central parts of Njelu, Mshope and Matengo into their fold. In contrast, the scattered Ndendeuli communities actively rejected European Christianity in favour of an indigenous development of Islam, partly because Christianity was perceived to be closely linked to Ngoni domination. Their egalitarian, kinship-based, extending individual networks and shifting agricultural systems were also conducive to the uptake of tobacco and food crop production, and the development of vibrant primary societies for marketing through a cooperative union.

Under Indirect Rule the subordinate relationship of Ndendeuli to their historical overlords was formalised and strengthened. But by the time Gulliver was writing on Songea in 1954, the Ndendeuli were at the height of an ethnic awakening. Following twenty years of increasingly confident and coherent resistance to Ngoni rule, the Ndendeuli managed to secede in 1953 and were granted their own Native Authority by a sympathetic British administration. Employing discourses of modernity and democracy that were rejected by the Ngoni ruling families, their new administration was said to resemble the Cooperative Union that had been so important to their economic development, with a pyramid of democratic councils and a presidential election every three years. In 1955 Julius Nyerere visited Songea District, and the Ndendeuli transferred their heightened political awareness and activism from narrow tribalism to TANU's fight for National Independence, while their Ngoni counterparts remained deeply reluctant partly because of active suppression by Ngoni Native Authorities, European missionaries and the Colonial State. Nearly fifty years later, despite Nyerere's successes in suppressing ethnic and religious political affiliations, local conflicts are kept alive by the Cooperative Union and District Council that straddle the two regions. In March 2002 history repeated itself with the unexpected presidential announcement that the eastern half of Songea District would break away on 1 July to form an independent district, with its own commissioner, council, tax raising powers, and development programmes. Ndendeuli 'nationalism' had struck again, and they will soon control almost the entire Songea tobacco industry, leaving the Ngoni with an impoverished economic base to fund local services.

When one is confronted with this outline history, the idea that the skewed distribution of tobacco is due solely to ecological and economic factors becomes extremely unlikely.

Social, political and cultural factors must be examined as part of a comparative history of the two regions and their dominant ethnic groups. Since my encounter with the PLUM team, basic questions motivated my research: Why do the Ndendeuli grow so much tobacco? Why did they reject Christianity? Why did they so readily support the National Independence movement? And why were they so often the targets of government programmes to stabilise land use and settlement patterns? An overall theme emerged which emphasizes multi-dimensional processes rather than causal relationships between discrete factors such as 'tobacco', 'Islam' or 'democracy' – an emphasis on 'courses rather than causes' (Morrison 1996:583). This theme can be summarised with the question: to what extent can Ndendeuli history be seen as an endogenous movement to build a new society in opposition to that found at the Ngoni centre of power? More broadly, to what extent can their divergent pathways be seen as expressions of shared experiences unfolding in a stable 'metropolitan' rural community as opposed to its eastern frontier? Are these experiences common to other former pre-colonial states in Sub-Saharan Africa? Is it empirically valid to think in terms of an African 'frontier theory' or 'settlement theory' that might offer new ways to frame analyses of rural development trajectories in other African districts?

Stability and Sustainability

A second powerful narrative can be seen to run through Songea history concerning the linked issues of sustainability of land use and the stability of settlement. Throughout the British colonial period successive administrators grappled with what they perceived to be the greatest technical obstacle to local development: the so-called 'boundary problem'. During the brutal suppression and subsequent reprisals following the Maji Maji rebellion in southern Tanzania in 1905-06, there was unprecedented demographic disruption. An estimated one-third of the population died of starvation and injury while a further one-third fled the region to the east, south into Mozambique or west towards the Lake Nyasa coast. Over the coming two decades people began to move back, and formed new communities of mixed origin, often in hitherto uninhabited areas. Individual Native Authorities under colonial rule insisted on retaining the historical bonds of allegiance with their former adherents, yet these were now dispersed over considerable areas so that boundaries designating territorial responsibilities were impossible to fix. Successive administrators despaired over the inefficiency this created for tax collection and implementation of development programmes, and the general lack of authority and influence over their subjects. Programmes to rationalise administration were met with resistance, in particular from Njelu Native Authorities upon whom the impact would have been greatest. Meanwhile the imposition of Mshope Native Authorities over Ndendeuli

populations to the east had taken place twenty years after Maji Maji, so that territorial units were far easier to demarcate. However, the Ndendeuli were subjected to a different kind of intervention – forced resettlement – essentially a drive to bring the scattered remote populations under greater state (and thus Ngoni) influence. In many ways resettlement was the opposite of the rationalisation designed to overcome the boundary problem. Instead of breaking and reforming bonds of allegiance in line with territorial units of administration, resettlement relocated the people themselves.

Despite the opposition and resentment these interventions generated, it was a democratic administration that eventually solved the boundary problem in Njelu in 1961, and carried out the most coercive and far-reaching resettlement effort in Tanzanian history – the Villagisation Programme of 1974. For the Ngoni, Villagisation was largely an exercise in ‘tidying up’ what had historically become numerous small, stable and structured communities evolving organically alongside the expanding Benedictine mission infrastructure of schools and churches. In Undendeuli, the programme was severe, and transformed rural settlement beyond recognition with the rapid establishment of a dozen large villages along the sparse road network. The immediate consequences for land use and agricultural production were softened by heavy government subsidies of fertiliser and favourable pricing of Songea maize. Ironically, 25 years on, the outcome in Undendeuli closely resembles the administrative chaos of colonial Njelu, with a sizeable proportion of residents moving back to their original homes to farm throughout the rainy season and leaving children at school in their official villages of residence between five and thirty miles away. A subtler campaign of participatory land use management effectively aims to undo the damage of Villagisation in Undendeuli in another attempt to rationalise land use, settlement patterns and village boundaries. Despite the best efforts of competent local staff, the programme is unable to diagnose or act upon the fundamental causes of instability and unsustainability. These characteristics are now institutionalised within Ndendeuli society through 100 years of frontier development. The different ways in which interventions were implemented among the Ngoni and Ndendeuli can be linked to the divergent representations of each group that were emerging during British rule. Representations were partly a response to the physical and social conditions unfolding in a stable settlement as opposed to its frontiers, and may therefore have emerged in other colonial districts administering former pre-colonial states like the Ngoni. The Maji Maji rising was, of course, a contingent historical event that sets Songea District apart from others, but, even here, the response of the colonial administration to its demographic and socio-political consequences was a reflection of a frontier-metropole dynamic.

The idea that Undendeuli is the frontier of Ungoni, then, runs throughout the thesis, and a few words are necessary to define the notion of frontier. Undendeuli is a frontier primarily in a physical sense of being a geographical region on the fringes of another region of greater population density. Following Kopytoff (1987) the latter will be referred to as a 'metropole'. Beyond the frontier lies land that is considered uninhabited and unclaimed. In practice there may be all kinds of overlapping claims to this 'unclaimed' land even if the area is not permanently settled. Its designation as 'unclaimed' is a social construction grounded in the perceptions of particular individuals or social groups who may consider other users' claims as illegitimate or simply irrelevant. Nevertheless, the basic point is that a frontier region is indicated between regions of high and low population density. A second physical characteristic of a frontier is that the population density is increasing relative to its metropole. Related to this is the likelihood that patterns of land use and settlement in a frontier region are unstable, again, relative to its metropole which probably has a more settled history of land use and residence. At this point, it becomes clear that the metropole is almost certainly also the local centre of power. In pre-colonial times it may have been one of countless centralised states throughout Africa while the frontiers and peripheral regions were what Fortes and Evans-Prichard called 'acephalous' or 'stateless' societies, with no overall political organisation or identity. These contrasts were typically sustained during the colonial period, especially under British Indirect Rule which was able to deal with centralised states much more effectively than stateless societies. The latter were either governed by imposed advisors, or subordinated under neighbouring states as in the case of the Ndendeuli and Ngoni. Thus, frontier societies grew up on the fringes of state control in regions of indeterminate political and moral authority.

At this point it is necessary to draw a distinction between a frontier and a periphery. The notions of centre (or core) and periphery feature in a considerable body of work, much of which is bound up in neo-Marxist dependency theory paradigms that emerged during the 1970s. Core-periphery relations tend to be characterised in terms of exploitation and colonisation of a politically weak region by the centre of power. While scholars have stressed how individuals and groups at the periphery may actively shape their lives, the paradigm tends to imply exploitation of the periphery by hegemonic cultural forces and inequitable economic relations. Thus, peripheral regions tend to be constructed as economic, political and cultural backwaters, whose unfortunate inhabitants are forced to look to the centre for support, inspiration, and ultimately as a destination for economic migration (e.g. Seppala and

Koda 1998). However, a frontier is a region experiencing immigration, not outmigration. This demographic trend must be because a frontier has something to offer, either an economic resource, such as fertile land or the prospect of engaging in, for example, a thriving tobacco industry, or perhaps cultural opportunities denied to individuals or groups in regions subjected to what is considered to be unacceptable social control.

The distinction between economic and cultural motivations hints at a further refinement to our definition. The frontier can be simply an extension of the metropole, whereby individuals relocate to the edges of their established society and reproduce the same political structures, social institutions and cultural values. In this case the frontier is essentially colonised by the metropole, and it shares many of the characteristics of peripheral regions. However, the frontier can also be a physical and social space where new structures, institutions and norms can be invented or transferred from elsewhere, often by a population with diverse origins that seeks to build a new social order in which individuals can survive and prosper. In doing so they will inevitably be influenced by relations with the metropole which at some point may no longer tolerate the emergence of a new autonomous society within what it considers to be its sphere of influence. In the case of the Ndendeuli the outcome was a long struggle to assert their autonomy and resist Ngoni political and cultural domination.

It is this kind of frontier that the thesis addresses, and my findings suggest that it has been a common phenomenon in the history of Sub-Saharan Africa. This claim is based partly on an appreciation of the continent's demographic conditions whereby a relatively low population density existed during the nineteenth century. Population was also unevenly distributed due to variations in physical conditions (not least the availability of water) and political organisation which in many cases led to aggregation into centralised states, surrounded by unclaimed land and bordered by frontiers and peripheries under varying degrees of incorporation. Population growth throughout the twentieth century ensured that many of these regions rapidly filled with people, in particular in regions that favoured colonial cash crop production for export, or food crops grown for local urban markets or labour migrant communities. Under colonial and post-colonial rule these frontier regions were often administered by subordination to existing political centres, as we have seen, sometimes with damaging material consequences for frontier societies while at the same time official political discourses offered a language in which to express a growing political consciousness and activism. However, we must not lose sight of the metropole. The thesis puts equal weight on both Ndendeuli and Ngoni because it is insufficient to try to understand frontier regions in isolation. Similarly the thesis is grounded in an understanding of the changing agroecological

environments of the two societies since their histories are closely bound up in the physical properties of the Songea landscape.

It will be clear that the notion of frontier used in this thesis is also distinct from the notion of a borderland between two administrative units (as applied for example by Nugent 2002 for his study of the Ghana-Togo frontier). Similarly, a frontier is defined here as an entire region rather than just its outer edge that is perhaps being pushed ever forwards by shifting cultivators into virgin forest or wilderness. A final point concerns what has been described in a similar context as “the familiar tension between the twin anthropological goals of illuminating particular cases and building general and processual models on a comparative basis” (Wilk 1996:601). There is a danger that my definitions of frontier and metropole become too closely bound up with my case study of the Ndendeuli and Ngoni. In doing so I would begin to erode the value in my stated aim of understanding how their respective histories were shaped by frontier or metropolitan conditions common to other parts of Africa. The answer lies in two directions: first, a literature review (or better still comparative research) to refine the conceptual tools for comparison with other African districts, and secondly my reorientation of the thesis, away from its initial aims, towards understanding processes rather than factors, courses rather than causes of change.

Studies of African Agrarian History

The History and Anthropology of Songea District

A slim body of literature exists on the history and anthropology of Songea District comprising perhaps a dozen theses, books and reports with important empirical material or analysis, and the majority of these were based upon work carried out in the 1950s and 1960s. It has been said that the neglect of Songea by researchers is a consequence of official restrictions for security purposes on travel to the region in response to the influx of Mozambican refugees during the war of independence and subsequent civil war in the 1980s. Yet little has been written since. Consequently, Gulliver’s prolific writings (in particular 1954, 1955, 1971 and 1974) are of paramount importance. His *Administrative Survey of the Ngoni and Ndendeuli of Songea District* and *Labour Migration in a Rural Economy* give much empirical and historical material on governance, economy, politics and society as well as insights into late-colonial official constructions of African society. *Neighbours and Networks* offers an extraordinarily thorough analysis of the egalitarian network of kinship relations in eastern Ndendeuli society in the mid-1950s as expressed through economic cooperation and conflict resolution.

Although his agenda was of limited relevance to this thesis – regrettably lessened by the absence of comparative material for Ngoni society – he describes certain local events and processes in order to clarify his theoretical points, and in doing so unwittingly provides historical detail that help us to understand social change in that specific time and place that adds much to this thesis. Again, in *Political Evolution in the Songea Ngoni Chiefdoms, 1850-1905*, Gulliver analyses divergent trends in Njelu and Mshope politics that can be used directly to reconstruct pre-colonial settlement patterns.

The Benedictine missionary Father Elzear Ebner compiled numerous oral histories in the 1950s, and his manuscripts were published posthumously as *A History of the Wangoni* (Ebner 1987) which today must be regarded as the most important primary source on pre- and early colonial Ngoni. His contribution was greatly expanded and reinterpreted by Redmond (1985) with a thorough and reliable account of Ngoni political history, based mainly on archival work in the late 1960s. Gallagher's (1971) study of *Islam and the Rise of the Ndendeuli* provides a partial treatment of the uptake of religion in Songea, but must be complemented by additional sources, most notably Abbot Lambert Doerr's accessible history of the Benedictine mission in Peramiho (Doerr 1998). Newa (1970) gives a well-researched, if polemical, account of *The Ndendeule Struggle Against Ngoni Feudalism and British Imperialism*. Mpangala (1977) builds on his previous work on the Maji Maji rebellion in Songea (Mapunda and Mpangala 1969) with a neo-Marxist account of Ngoni 'proletarianisation' and Ndendeuli 'peasantisation', which gives important original sources and insights. Material was drawn from most of these works by Iliffe (1979) in his *Modern History of Tanganyika*, which provides an authoritative national context to understand the significance of local processes and events.

Comparative Studies in African Rural History

A vast number of studies examine long-term relationships between population, environment and livelihoods in rural Africa, although many are restricted to economic aspects at the expense of the social, cultural, political and historical. Studies which have had particular impact on the development policy-making community tend to polarise around the long-standing debate between a neo-Malthusian view whereby a vicious cycle of population increase is seen to drive environmental degradation which in turn increases poverty (e.g. Williams 1995, Ross 1998) and the optimistic position inspired by Boserup (1965) whereby population increase drives agricultural innovation and intensification. One of the most important works in this genre is *More People, Less Erosion* (Tiffen, Mortimore and Gichuki 1994). Their study examined agricultural change in Machakos District, Kenya, over a 60-year

period and has been used to support the view that rural African communities are fully capable of adapting to changing demographic and market conditions to ensure economic and environmental sustainability. Perhaps the most effective research method employed in the Machakos study comprised matched pairs of landscape photographs from the 1930s and 1990s showing how population increase had led to intensification of agriculture and sustainable use of soils, land and forest. This approach was attempted in Songea District as part of my thesis but with limited success since the District's rural landscape has not been sufficiently photographed (see discussion of methodology below). The impact of the Machakos study can be attributed in part to the simple message of its title, suggesting that there was a clear link between population and resource use along the lines proposed by Boserup. The authors are careful not to generalise from this single example, and in fact they have gone on to coordinate several comparative studies in other parts of semi-arid Africa, which, when viewed together, weaken the case for a simple causal link (e.g. Mortimore 1998). Numerous other studies have drawn similar conclusions (Turner, Hyden and Kates 1993; Wiggins 2000). Nevertheless the debate between neo-Malthusians and Boserupians continues, arguably because nobody has yet proposed an alternative. The ways in which policy development follows a sequential pattern of narrative and counter narrative in order to operate effectively and coherently has been highlighted in the context of rural development by Roe (1991, 1995). The popularity of *More People, Less Erosion* demonstrates the demand from the development community for a consistent position on this complex issue. A motivating force behind my research in Songea District was to work towards such a position, by abandoning or transcending the terms set by the Malthus versus Boserup debate.

A related body of literature, which might be labelled political ecology, dealt with a similar dichotomy from a different perspective by emphasising the cultural and discursive dimensions of both African farming communities and European development communities. As mentioned above, among these was *Misreading the African Landscape* (Fairhead and Leach 1996), and edited collections by Leach and Mearns (1996) and Stott and Sullivan (2000). Here the aim is to show how environmental orthodoxies are often ill-conceived or represent the interests of certain powerful groups. Fairhead and Leach compared aerial photographs from the 1950s with satellite imagery from the 1990s of the savanna-forest transition zone in Kissidougou Prefecture, northern Guinea. The striking landscape of forest islands surrounded by savanna grassland in this region had been imagined by European visitors for decades to be the remnants of a once continuous forest extending throughout West Africa. Yet the photographs indicated that land use and settlement has been remarkably stable throughout this time. Anthropological research and oral histories supported this conclusion and discovered how local residents were actively recreating the forest islands and managing

them as sophisticated agroforestry systems that were embedded in local society and culture. Rather than being remnants of a former continuous forest that had been degraded through primitive land use practices, the forest islands were the outcome of continuous and sophisticated local intervention. Their study took this insight further by demonstrating the vested interests that lay behind the persistent official constructions of local misuse of the land.

My original aim was to replicate this methodological and theoretical agenda in Songea District, but I soon discovered that there simply was no significant rift between official and local discourses regarding people-environment relations.¹ What Fairhead and Leach's study did provide, however, was an example of an established agrarian society with a very stable pattern of settlement and land use in which local social organisation, cultural norms, and livelihood strategies were firmly embedded. In this sense, Kissidougou was comparable with central Ungoni. Furthermore, both societies were characterised as conservative, whose people were resistant to change, albeit for different specific reasons. Rather than comparing local and official constructions of Ungoni, as originally intended, the thesis was reoriented to compare Ungoni with Undendeuli – metropole with frontier – both in terms of representation and reality. In doing so the thesis could explore similar themes to Fairhead and Leach – power, culture, settlement and livelihoods – but take the agenda further by including the extra dimension embodied in a geographical continuum from the stable, powerful Ngoni metropole to the unstable subordinated Ndendeuli frontier. Indeed it would be rewarding to revisit Kissidougou and examine how their findings hold up as one travels towards the peripheries of the stable regions that formed the focus of their study (see Fairhead and Leach, 1998, for comparative studies in West Africa). The frontier-metropole continuum offers a fresh way of framing analyses of agrarian trajectories and taking the polarised debates forward.

Certainly one way forward is to abandon the search for unilineal evolutionary schemes and focus on the study of historical trajectories with a view to making empirical generalisations. Scoones and Wolmer (2002) have attempted this in *Pathways of Change in Africa*. They highlight a persistent conviction within the development community that African agricultural development should naturally follow a path towards a stable agrarian economy of mixed farming households. Interventions were designed accordingly to ensure that this happened. The combination of crop and livestock components in the farming system were

¹ Such a rift is noticeable, however, in official discourses surrounding soil conservation measures in the early 1950s which justified coercive campaigns and generated much resentment and resistance, but this revealing story can only be mentioned in passing since it has little bearing on the comparative history of Ngoni and Ndendeuli. Anderson (1984) located colonial soil conservation programmes within Western constructions of society-environment relations, which helps us to understand their divergence with local priorities.

seen to increase diversity and productivity, reduce risk, improve sustainability through recycling of nutrients, and provide draught power (Scoones and Wolmer 2002:1). The lesson to be drawn from nine case studies in Africa was that no such generalisations could be made, and policy-makers need to face the complex reality of a world governed by agency and contingency. Their case studies were selected to cover a range of contrasting agroecological zones defined principally by rainfall but also by differences in population density, cattle ownership, farm size, major crops, and market access (Scoones and Wolmer 2002:3). While acknowledging that the authors must be well aware of the huge range of variables that might conceivably be included in such a research programme, this thesis demonstrates the problem with the use of population density. Population density became approximately uniform in Ngoni and Ndendeuli by 1967, yet there are of course striking differences in pathways of change in each region. Another objective of this thesis, then, is to explore whether the notions of frontier and metropole, or settlement stability and instability, offer a new way to frame analyses of such historical trajectories.

Similarly, Berry (1993) in *No Condition is Permanent* used four case studies in Africa to examine the long-term social dynamics of agrarian change. Her selection of sites aimed to represent “different patterns of local incorporation into colonial (later national) and global political economies”, an approach that shares common ground with my comparison of frontier and metropole. Interestingly she concluded that her criterion for selection “did not necessarily exercise a decisive influence over subsequent patterns of agrarian change” (Berry 1993:8). One of her choices, north-east Zambia, a rural labour reserve with features in common with colonial Ungoni, provided historical details for comparison. As with Moore and Vaughan’s acclaimed study of the same region, *Cutting Down Trees* (Moore and Vaughan 1994), I was left wondering how pathways of agricultural change at the centre of the Bemba State contrasted with those for the subordinated ethnic groups on its peripheries.² Berry’s focus was on access to productive resources, which she argues “continued to be negotiated through membership in descent groups and communities” requiring individuals to continue to invest in social networks. The boundaries and structures of these networks continued to be fluid and contested, and if any long-term trend could be discerned it was towards a reduced ability to “count on any particular relationship as a stable basis for access to resources” leading over time to greater reliance on hired labour. Government interventions have tended

² Moore and Vaughan revealed an enduring official narrative that the Bemba *citemene* system of agriculture was breaking down as a consequence of the individualism and detribalisation brought about by labour migration and economic development. This was seen as a symptom of a wider collapse in society-environment relations which was perceived to be a fragile balance between two separate systems. Their insightful analysis has helped with interpretations of related constructions of Ngoni society in Chapter Three.

to “add to the instability of farmers’ circumstances” rather than transform practices (Berry 1993:200-1). The theme of investing in social networks to gain access to productive resources makes a valuable contribution, but not because of an apparent general trend towards individualism. Historically, there have been fundamental differences in the structure of Ngoni and Ndendeuli society, because one is the frontier of the other. These differences help to explain their differential engagement with successive innovations such as tobacco, world religions, and even the movement for National Independence. While fully supporting Berry’s decision to select case studies based upon differences in how regions have been incorporated in the wider political economy, I argue that much is to be gained by using a similar basis for comparison between contiguous regions such as Ungoni and Undendeuli. The uniform physical environment, economic structures, and policy regimes applied throughout the central belt of Songea District reduces the range of factors and allows the comparison to focus on the social, cultural and political.

There has been a strong tradition of environmental studies in Tanzanian historiography since *Ecology Control and Economic Development in Tanganyika* (Kjekshus 1977a) and consolidated recently with *Custodians of the Land* (Maddox *et al.* 1996). Much of this literature is concerned with a debate between a pre-colonial golden age in African agriculture – a “Merrie Africa” – with a view of Africa as “Dark Continent” in a constant state of warfare and disorder (Giblin and Maddox 1996:8). As with the Malthus versus Boserup debate, one need look no further than the Ngoni and Ndendeuli and their contrasting pre-colonial histories to see elements of each extreme view and to appreciate the difficulty of generalisations. Again, the contrast between frontier and metropole may allow useful ways to categorise and frame this enduring debate. Of this genre, *Mountain Farmers* (Spear 1997) offered a promising model for my thesis, since it is also a comparative history of two neighbouring ethnic groups – Arusha and Meru – which examines the divergence of contrasting cultural economies. As with the Ngoni and Ndendeuli, “The co-existence of two peoples of markedly different cultural backgrounds in a common environmental and economic situation thus formed a natural basis for comparison” (Spear 1997:6). Meru agriculture developed around banana and coffee while for much of their history in the region the Arusha relied on mixed arable and cattle farming, and started growing coffee only by the 1950s (Spear 1997:118). There were related differences in the response to Christianity with the emergence of two distinctive and separate Meru and Arusha Lutheran churches (Spear 1997:169). Since Christianity took hold among both societies, official constructions diverged along religious rather than ethnic lines, with Arusha and Meru Christians alike being described as progressive – “an emerging class of commercial farmers and incipient capitalists” (Spear 1997:170). This construction was common in colonial Tanganyika, and

matched official attitudes to Matengo Christian coffee growers to the west of Ungoni as described in Chapter Four. Unusually, in Ungoni, Islam was seen to be the progressive force while Christianity was diagnosed as one of the causes of Ngoni conservatism.

Regarding agricultural intensification, Spear identifies both Arusha and Meru agricultural history as “exemplars of Boserup’s thesis” (Spear 1997:151) but only in the impressionistic sense that neither region had experienced environmental degradation in the face of rapid population growth. One might argue that Spear goes beyond Boserup by pointing out that the direction of her causal link could just as plausibly be reversed: “While one could assert that population drove them to intensify and the fertility of the land enabled them to do so, one could also reverse the equation to assert that the fertility of the land and the success of agricultural development allowed population to continue to increase at the rates that it did without extensive out-migration, increased death rates, or lower fertility” (Spear 1997:152). Spear’s study offers potential, yet the divergence in cultural economies between Arusha and Meru lies in their very different historical and geographical origins, while the divergence between Ngoni and Ndendeuli is arguably a consequence of different degrees of incorporation into the pre-colonial Ngoni State. This factor, in turn, was largely a function of distance from the centre of power, in other words a continuum from metropole to frontier. At this point the comparison of Arusha and Meru with Ngoni and Ndendeuli breaks down.

Boserup also inspired a generation of researchers in the field of human or cultural ecology, exemplified by the lifetime’s work of Robert Netting on the socio-economics of smallholder agriculture (e.g. Netting 1993). Glenn Stone takes Netting’s agenda further with an original interdisciplinary study of the relationships between agricultural production and settlement patterns among the Kofyar who have been gradually filling a frontier region in the northern Nigerian savanna for some decades (Stone 1996). The title of his book, *Settlement Ecology*, is the term he gives his approach that ultimately seeks a general theory of agrarian settlement (Stone 1996:27). Starting from classic works in rural settlement theory such as Von Thünen (1826) and Chisholm (1962), he proposes a number of “settlement rules” but quickly refines this goal to a more modest search for “priorities of varying strength” (Stone 1996:8, 182-5). He succeeds in devising an agroecological framework, but admits defeat when it comes to providing a predictive model of agrarian settlement evolution that can cope with the range of possible historical and cultural contexts (1996:185). Thus, he turns to culture only in the last chapter, and proposes a dichotomy between ‘intensifiers’ and ‘extensifiers’ based upon observed ethnic differences: “I was intrigued by the permanency of Kofyar settlement in precisely the same locales where Tiv settlement had been ephemeral”. While the Kofyar intensified under population pressure, “the Tiv response was often to abandon the locale and move on to a new spot on the nearly empty savanna” (Stone

1996:188). As we have seen, a related comparison between Ngoni and Ndendeuli forms the starting point for my thesis, but unfortunately Stone made this observation as part of his conclusion. Following Bohannan (1954:2), Stone hints at a link between Tiv segmentary social organisation and their ability to mobilise kin to contest boundary disputes (Stone 1996:189) but one is left feeling that the most valuable part of Stone's study has only just begun.

The African Frontier

A single work stands out from the Africanist literature that addresses the frontier theme head-on: *The African Frontier* (Kopytoff 1987). Some anthropologists (Conant 1989:1075) have seen this work as a successor to the earlier classics *African Political Systems* (Fortes and Evans-Prichard 1940) and *Tribes without Rulers* (Middleton and Tait 1958) while others, more oriented towards cultural studies, have criticised its emphasis on structure over content (De Boeck and Jules-Rosette 2002:6). In his introductory essay, Kopytoff proposes a general model of how African societies and ethnicities emerge and develop on the frontiers of established polities. His thesis lies in stark contrast to a former tribal model of ethnogenesis which presupposes a particular historical pathway: "an ethnic germ, its beginnings lost in the mists of the past growing through time, retaining its essential character, and becoming a people that, in turn, becomes or deserves to become a nation" (Kopytoff 1987:4). This notion, he asserts, has "nothing to do with the formation of real, historic African societies" (1987:3). Confidently calling upon "the results of the last fifty years of Africanist scholarship" he reminds us how frequently one encounters stories of disgruntled, discredited, ambitious or adventurous individuals who leave their settlements, accompanied often by various adherents, to establish themselves in the "no-man's land between established polities – that is into the local frontier zone". Typically they will return to their places of origin, but often the settlement develops into a hamlet, and a community, by welcoming immigrants who have been similarly ejected from elsewhere. "Sometimes", explains Kopytoff, "the new settlement solidifies, joins with other settlements or establishes a hegemony over them, and finally crystallizes into a new polity and eventually a society" (1987:6). Before this stage is reached, the emergent frontier community has an indeterminate organisation and culture:

Such a society does not quite hang together. It presents a mishmash of regional cultural traits. It is usually small and neither shows nor often claims much time-depth. The legitimacy of its political institutions comes periodically into question, as does its independence from nearby polities who may dispute the very territory it occupies. Such a society is apt to annoy the

administrator (colonial or African) for whom the tribal model –with its essential unity, clear body of customary law, and unambiguous legitimacies – is better suited to the task of maintaining public tranquility. Such a society is also not very interesting to most anthropologists... (1987:4-5).

This description fits perfectly the situation in Undendeuli in the 1930s and 1940s, before Ndendeuli identity was constructed and asserted during their claim for local independence from Ngoni rule. Kopytoff argues that African societies rarely fit this description in academic literature, partly due to the lack of interest they have generated among scholars, but also because they are short-lived social formations that will either develop in complexity or become subsumed within a neighbouring established polity (1987:5). Kopytoff proposes that most African societies were formed in this way, and this has given African societies a shared political culture with a “frontier cast” that has led systematically to the continuous reproduction of new frontier polities, and a “frontier-conditioned ideology” in African metropolitan political consciousness (1987:7). These grander aspects of Kopytoff’s theory are of less relevance here, as my focus is more concerned with the processes that take place between the time of frontier settlement and development of a ‘mature’ polity. Nevertheless, Kopytoff’s focus on the role of the frontier in shaping political culture can be adapted to understand cultural differences between Ndendeuli and Ngoni.

The point of departure for Kopytoff’s model is Frederick Jackson Turner’s thesis that the development of American political culture was heavily influenced by a shared frontier experience, an idea that has generated much support and criticism since Turner proposed it in 1893. Although later formulations of his thesis were less deterministic, Kopytoff notes that Turner’s work continues to inspire the same kinds of questions: “does the frontier everywhere produce the same results? or, less ambitiously, is the frontier generalizable as a cause?” Kopytoff’s answer leaves no room for doubt: “as anyone acquainted with history knows or should know, it does not and it is not” (1987:12). Rather than the physical conditions of the North American frontier creating the American national political character, frontier conditions provided an environment of opportunity where “the frontiersmen could literally *construct* a desirable social order” (1987:12). To conclude: the frontier is “permissive rather than determinant; it does not create a type of society and culture but provides instead an institutional vacuum for the unfolding of social processes” (1987:14). Furthermore, rather than arriving with a *tabula rasa*, immigrants had a “mental model of a good society” which they brought with them from their places of origin (1987:12-13).

At this point, Kopytoff’s model appears to be at variance with Ndendeuli history. He writes: “A crucial factor in the outcome of the frontier process is the nature of the initial model carried from the metropolitan culture to the frontier” (1987:14). Kopytoff gives the

impression of a single model imported from the neighbouring metropole that is shared by the majority of immigrants, or at least those who came to assert a new hegemony over the emerging society. But, as shown in subsequent chapters, the notion of a single model transposed from a single local source through a process of diffusion does not fit the empirical evidence for Songea history. Similarly, Kopytoff concludes: "If communications continue between the metropole and the frontier, the repetitive use of the model on the frontier maintains it in the regional cultural awareness, validates it, and constantly revitalizes it. The frontier may consequently act as a culturally and ideologically conservative force" (1987:14). While I do not challenge his overall conclusion, my concern with this claim is, again, the notion of a single model that comes to pervade regional political culture. As we shall see, the "mishmash of regional cultural traits" that came to be employed in Undendeuli did not all originate in Ungoni.

While Kopytoff rightly rejects 'frontier determinism', he does go on to propose a unilineal sequence of stages which implicitly runs in parallel with an increase in population. Once the first immigrants had settled and had begun to construct a new social order, new adherents were attracted to swell numbers and thus power and influence. Kopytoff argues that "this was done by resorting to a kin-group model of integration", and, as we see in Chapter Six, Ndendeuli communities under colonial rule did indeed comprise an open egalitarian network organised around the idiom of kinship. If population increased (and there is no *a priori* reason why it should) this organisation could no longer be sustained. Kopytoff writes: "In this second stage, the polity moved from a corporate kin-group model of integration to one emphasizing the inter-dependence between rulers and subjects" (1987:17). Meanwhile authority was increasingly legitimated by the designation "firstcomer", often a contested notion. Later an "ideological duality" emerges between rulers and subjects, but these distinctions become more integrated as society increased in complexity. The mature polity then seeks legitimacy in the eyes of its neighbours: "This required it to abandon its parochialism and draw upon values, traditions, and legitimizing themes widely shared in the region". Finally, the stable, integrated mature polity might embark on an expansionist project at the expense of its neighbours, a scenario that certainly fits early Ngoni history throughout southern Tanzania (1987:17). This sequence offers a satisfying counter narrative to the colonial evolutionary tribal model. But, as Murray Last points out: "the danger, of course, is to focus on these migratory 'gyrations' as Trevor-Roper notoriously did, and not on the political (and cultural) skills that forged these mini-states" (Last 1989:704).

Of the nine case studies in *The African Frontier* the most relevant to this thesis is the work of William Arens in *Mto wa Mbu: a Rural Polyethnic Community in Tanzania* (Arens 1987). Its comparability with Undendeuli is partly because it covers the same time period in

the same country but also because it stresses the diverse composition of the frontier pioneers. Farmers from dispersed origins migrated into Mto wa Mbu to exploit lands that were marginal to the pastoralist communities that dominated the region. The ethnic identities of these immigrants were replaced by an emerging unified Islamic identity that stressed 'civilisation' as opposed to the 'primitive' pastoralism of surrounding Masai communities. Yet under Indirect Rule this emerging ethnicity had not fully established itself by the time the National Independence movement had arrived, and Mto wa Mbu "happened to conform to the 'anti-tribal' ideals of the national government" (Kopytoff 1987:240). Furthermore their position was also enhanced by asserting the contrast between their 'civilised' state and their 'primitive' Masai neighbours. Kopytoff concludes: "Mto wa Mbu found the legitimization of its own local incomplete ethnicity in the ideological constructs of an emergent national metropole" (1987:241). By now it will be clear that the frontier character of Mto wa Mbu has close parallels with Ndendeuli. Arguably, not just identity, but also the social and political institutions of both societies were not sufficiently established by the mid-1950s allowing easier transition towards participatory forms of government than in many established polities. This observation underscores the fundamental contribution of Kopytoff to my thesis, namely the notion of the frontier as an enabling environment where a new society can be constructed from the economic, cultural and social materials available at that time and place. It is primarily the significance of this characteristic that I wish to contrast in Ndendeuli and Ngoni history.

Researching Rural Change

Mapping Frontier and Metropole

At no point within the literature on Songea, or indeed during any interview or conversation during my field research, was it suggested that Undendeuli was a 'frontier region'. The informant who got closest to this characterisation was the MP for Undendeuli who stressed how the region had been consistently neglected by the Government, the Ngoni, and the missionaries alike. But as we have seen, neglect by the authorities is also a defining feature of a peripheral region. One of the reasons why Undendeuli has not been constructed as a frontier is that its relatively rapid population growth compared to Ungoni has only recently become apparent. Population censuses and maps compiled before 1967 were unreliable, and until this time nobody in Songea District imagined that the population in Undendeuli might be increasing. Indeed the prevailing orthodoxy among late-colonial administrators was that the

population in the District as a whole was stationary or even decreasing, in contrast with the rest of East Africa, due to labour migration to the Coast (Gulliver 1954:99). According to Gulliver, the earliest systematic counts of the total populations of the Ngoni Chiefdoms were respectively: 48,300 in 1924; 58,000 in 1927; 49,600 in 1931, and 104,900 in 1948. “They are not, it will be seen, very satisfactory”, he noted. “A natural doubling of the population in 17 years (1931-48) cannot be accepted” (Gulliver 1954:100). Following analysis of several indications of population change, Gulliver concluded that the Songea population was “at least maintaining itself and may perhaps be increasing slightly” (Gulliver 1954:103). It appears that he did not consider differential rates of change between Ungoni and Undendeuli to be important or knowable. Only with the improved quality in statistics in the last thirty years was it possible to notice differential rates of growth on either side of the District. These trends allow us to approach colonial maps and statistics with greater confidence and extrapolate broad trajectories into the past. As part of this thesis, then, five new demographic maps of the District were prepared, for 1935, 1952, 1967, 1978 and 1998, each employing a different methodology and data source, and each with its own sources of error. Instead of attempting to adjust for these errors, they have been left unaltered to allow for greater transparency (see Maps 5 to 9 and Appendix 1 for description of methodology employed).

What emerges with striking clarity from this exercise, despite acknowledged weaknesses in method, is the fact that Undendeuli is the frontier of Ungoni. The data suggest that its population has increased over ten-fold since 1935 to its current state as a vibrant agricultural economy surrounding its new district centre at Namtumbo. Meanwhile Ungoni population has increased just three-fold: less than the increment normally attributed to biological population increase. In 1935 the population was extremely sparse in Undendeuli to the east. By 1967 the population density was effectively uniform throughout the central rural belt of the District. The dramatic difference by 1978, with clustering around village centres, is an impressionistic attempt to show the effects of the Villagisation Programme, and is probably accurate enough for present purposes. The same method was applied to the 1998 map, but by then many people in Undendeuli had begun to drift back to their original farms, perhaps five or ten miles away, especially during the cultivation season. Consequently, the 1998 map represents official residence patterns more accurately than actual location of people at any one time.³

³ Temporary settlements of Mozambican refugees can be seen on these maps: in the south-west corner of the District in 1967; at Mputa in northern Undendeuli in 1978, and at Likuyu in 1998 (see Chapter Six).

The clearest representation of the differences in stability of land use and settlement in Songea District is given in Map 10. This composite map was derived from reduced copies of six 1:250,000 land cover maps prepared in 1996 from satellite imagery.⁴ By superimposing village boundaries and village centres in 1997 from a map obtained from the Songea District Land Office, clear differences between Ungoni and Undendeuli land cover can be seen. To the west and immediately surrounding Songea town the aerial view of each village indicates, in its 'paradigmatic form' (for example in Nakahuga, see Map 3), a number of concentric rings of increasingly extensive land use as one moves outwards from each village centre. A ring of (orange) intensive cultivation is followed by a ring of (brown) extensive cultivation, grassland and bush fallow, surrounded in turn by rings of (light green) continuous bush cover and in some cases patches of (dark green) high forest, before the village boundary is reached and the pattern is repeated. By marked contrast, in the east, continuous cultivation halts abruptly at the edge of the high forest, as it works its way outwards from village centres and roads, indiscriminately crossing village boundaries, leaving few areas with land use of intermediate intensity. The abrupt transition lines between field and forest stand out as prominent scars across the *miombo* woodland landscape. The map strongly suggests that land use and settlement patterns have historically been more stable in Ungoni than in Undendeuli. As noted above, the apparent disorder in Undendeuli was largely a consequence of Villagisation. However, the greater disruption caused by the programme in Undendeuli was in turn a response to the scattered and unstable pattern that had existed before it was implemented. Behind these patterns in land cover lie a complex history linking differential engagement with world religions, and the colonial tobacco industry, differences in social organisation and integration into the structures of government, which are examined in turn in subsequent chapters.

Two further sets of maps can be introduced. The first shows spatial variations in agricultural production in 1997/98, compiled from data in the current files of the District Agricultural Office. Map 11 shows total annual production of tobacco per village. However, in order to adjust for variations in the size of villages, Map 12 gives tobacco production per head of population in each village, providing a measure of individual effort, willingness or ability to cultivate the crop. Maps 13 to 14 give the same information for maize and cassava. A further set of maps shows spatial variations in the production of tobacco in various years since the time the industry was fully established in 1939 was also prepared. These support the

⁴ A collaborative project between UDSM and Hunting Technical Services, UK.

current distribution of tobacco as represented in Map 12 as well as the differential increase in population in Undendeuli over the same time-scale, pointing us towards an appreciation of the fundamental links between the increase in tobacco and population in the region. Three maps were prepared (Maps 15 to 17) for 1939 (Source: Northcote and McGregor 1940), 1972 (Source: Songea District Agriculture Office archives) and 1995 (Source: Geist 1996) which show location of each market, its approximate catchment area, and the quantity purchased for each year.

The extent to which each of these, often highly skewed, crop distributions is a consequence of ecological differences as opposed to economic factors, or even less tangible cultural and political differences, is explored in Chapter Five. For now, it will help to give some basic information on ecology in Songea District. If soils, vegetation and climate are much the same throughout the District this allows us to 'rule them out' and focus on social, economic, cultural and political factors influencing the divergent pathways of Ungoni and Undendeuli. This becomes pertinent when we understand that agricultural production became the most significant benchmark for colonial and post-colonial judgements of Ngoni and Ndendeuli progressivism (see Chapter Three). A related point, examined in Chapter Five, is that agricultural policy and extension practice were applied uniformly throughout the case study area, with some notable exceptions, but certainly in the case of tobacco. Variations in the activities of the Agricultural Department cannot account for the skewed distribution of tobacco, maize, rice, cassava, beans, or millet in Songea District.

Rainfall in Songea District decreases slightly as one travels from the south-west to the north-east from perhaps 1300 mm to 900 mm, but the difference across the central belt of settlement which forms the focus of this thesis, and where tobacco is grown, is probably at most 250 mm. The spatial variation in rainfall is probably linked to relief and temperature. Most of central Njelu to the west is slightly higher than 1000 metres above sea level, with isolated granite inselbergs protruding haphazardly from the plateau that occasionally reach 1500 metres. As one travels east along the Songea-Lindi road the landscape descends to perhaps 750 metres in the Luegu Valley before gently rising again above 1000 metres beyond Namtumbo in the heart of Undendeuli (Government of Tanzania 1967). While these differences in rainfall, relief and thus temperature must effect local ecology, I encountered no source, written or verbal, suggesting that they had an impact on the distribution of tobacco, maize, cassava, rice, beans or millet (although the distribution of cashew, coffee and the occasional coconut tree were effected by climate).

Variations in soil types proved to be a difficult matter to research. Exhaustive efforts to correlate the categories of soil shown on the numerous, and often contradictory, soil maps

of Tanzania with the distribution of tobacco were far from conclusive.⁵ One pattern emerged from some of these maps which suggests that the bulk of the settled regions of central Ungoni and Undendeuli (the focus of this thesis) share the same red clay soils. On the eastern, northern and southern extremities of Undendeuli the soils become sandier and less suitable for agriculture in general. This impression is supported by numerous informants on the ground all of whom asserted that while there were local variations in soils throughout the District, Ungoni and Undendeuli were endowed with uniform red clay soils which were equally suitable for both tobacco and maize. Chapter Five analyses these sources in more detail. Some of the published maps appear to divide central Undendeuli into two regions, with red clay soils extending in a continuous block to encompass central Ungoni to the west, and lighter sandier soils extending into Tunduru to the east. This was the case for the map of Potential Land Use given in the *Atlas of Tanzania* (Government of Tanzania 1967:3B). To the west lay “soils of medium to high fertility with high potential”, while to the east lay “soils of very low fertility with moderate potential”. One might suspect that the “high fertile” block was derived from an inaccurate estimate of the contemporary extent of tobacco production, rather than from direct knowledge of soil fertility in the area, and this was felt to be the case with many of the maps. My conclusion was that oral and written sources had greater reliability for understanding the correlation between soils and crop production, and that the overriding consensus was that soils could not account for the skewed distribution of tobacco or maize.

Fieldwork Methodology and Experiences

The overall methodology employed for this study drew upon a range of disciplines – history, geography, anthropology, and environmental sciences. Maps were prepared from various sources to examine long-term trends and spatial patterns in settlement, land use and ecology. These were designed to complement three other broad research methods: semi-structured interviews and/or group discussions, archival and library research, and participant observation. Fieldwork was carried out on four separate visits to Tanzania between mid-August 1999 and the end of July 2002, giving a total of 16 months in Tanzania of which ten months were spent in Songea District. This disjointed itinerary was not planned, but proved to be an effective response to the need for periods in the UK and Dar es Salaam to reflect upon research findings with academic colleagues, and reorient my literature searches and research

⁵ See in particular Hathout 1983, Government of Tanzania 1956 and 1967. See also: Duckworth and Sturtz 1969, Kiango 1972, Conyers 1973, Samki and Harrop 1984, De Pauw 1983, Van Enckevort and Komba 1992:38, Schmeid 1989:21ff, Government of Tanzania 1991, Mussei *et al.* 1999.

agenda. The time in Dar es Salaam was spent using the National Archives and University Library, writing progress reports, gaining research permission, learning Kiswahili, interviewing informants, contacting supervisors, academic colleagues, friends and family, as well as taking short breaks from work. I completed two months of Kiswahili language training in Dar es Salaam before leaving for Songea. From that point I learnt informally through participation in local life, and the research itself. My progress was assisted greatly by the decision to live with Tanzanian friends while based in Songea. However the majority of field trips and interviews were carried out with a local interpreter to ensure that I understood as much as possible, to allow for discussion with my interpreter afterwards, and to smooth the way with logistics and the negotiations often required of the research process.

While in Songea District I lived with the family of Ntimbanjaye Millinga in Peramiho, some 15 miles west of Songea town, in the centre of the former Njelu Ngoni Chieftdom, now officially called Ruvuma Division. Peramiho has been the centre of operations for German and Swiss Benedictine missionaries since 1898, and a small town has grown up around the impressive Benedictine abbey, mission, schools and hospital. In 1998, Millinga retired from a career in TANU and, later, CCM party politics. Alongside my research activities we worked together to establish a new Non-Governmental Organisation, the Ruvuma Development Association (RUDA), a successor to the influential grassroots development movement during the 1960s of the same name (the RDA) which Millinga had initiated and led before becoming the Member of Parliament for Songea South in 1965. My decision to accept his offer to stay with his family proved to be most fortuitous, and my time there was rewarding and enjoyable. He assisted my research where possible as interpreter on a number of important field trips, but also he was on hand to discuss at length my findings on countless occasions. More than anyone else Millinga made a significant contribution to the intellectual development of this thesis. Being from the Lake Nyasa coast he referred to himself as Manda, one of the subject groups under pre-colonial Ngoni rule, but having resided in Njelu since his higher education by the missionaries in the 1950s he is seen by many as Ngoni – but not ‘true’ Ngoni – a distinction which will be examined later. It meant that our research on political issues in Undendeuli needed to be handled tactfully, but the contrasting perspectives of Millinga and our Ndendeuli informants often generated lively and revealing discussions.

Milinga was often unavailable, and with some difficulty I eventually found another knowledgeable interpreter, Lukas Ngonyani, who had worked in several senior roles in the tobacco industry since 1953 and was ideally suited for researching political history. Tragically he died in 2001 while I was visiting UK. On my last visit in 2002 I worked successfully with a retired Agricultural Field Officer, Swithun Chapiro, also from the Lake

Nyasa coast, whose strengths included an extremely sociable nature which made fieldwork a most enjoyable experience, and opened many doors. He had also worked in nearly every ward in the District over the last three decades. In the late 1990s he agreed to become acting Village Chairman in his adopted home village of Mlilayoyo in the border area between Ungoni and Ndendeuli, and was familiar with village level politics and culture. He was the ideal interpreter to help unravel the multifaceted reasons behind the skewed distribution of tobacco in the District, with an ability to 'get into character' when explaining for example how some Ndendeuli men thrive on their personal 'project' of increasing their number of wives and their acres of tobacco.

Together with my interpreters, I interviewed a broad range of informants throughout the District with different ethnicities, religions, genders, ages, personal histories of immigration, off-farm income sources, levels of education and so on. I also interviewed numerous government and party officials at all levels; Christian and Islamic leaders; retailers and itinerant traders; elders and unemployed youth. Throughout, the selection of informants was largely unstructured, responding to new ideas and opportunities as they revealed themselves. Several informants however were contacted because of their particular knowledge of local history, including early TANU leaders, and surviving leaders of the Ndendeuli separatist movement, elder missionaries, retired MPs, District Commissioners and Divisional Executive Officers, chiefs, sub-chiefs and jumbes, tobacco industry managers and cooperative leaders. Inputs by email with the Professor Phillip Gulliver were particularly rewarding. While in Dar es Salaam, I carried out several interviews with former leaders of Songea District, and participated in the community of fellow researchers. I liaised with staff at the Department of History, and Institute of Development Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam, and representatives from development agencies including SNV, GTZ, DFID, WWF, with an interest in Songea or who are carrying out similar research. Three visits to Morogoro town, headquarters of the Tanzanian tobacco industry, proved enlightening, and also allowed a visit to the Sokoine Agricultural University College.

My interview technique was open ended and flexible, allowing the interests and knowledge of the informant to influence the direction and content. During the first few months of fieldwork I tended to introduce my research topic as "environmental change over the last 100 years". Later I found myself including "agricultural and environmental change", and by mid-2001 I was explicitly comparing the history of Ngoni and Ndendeuli. It was around this time that I began initiating discussions with those key questions mentioned above, namely why did the Ndendeuli grow tobacco, adopt Islam, support TANU, and so on, while the Ngoni did not. These questions would often lead to laughter from my informants, or a broad grin followed by a nodding of heads. They were topics that were evidently of interest to

local people. I was aware that these kinds of questions might distort their position taken on these issues, as well as overly constraining the field of discussion, but I discovered that the majority of people were willing and able to offer their own constructions and opinions, and to contradict my points of departure. In order to avoid leading questions, but to deal with the practical requirements to 'get on with it', I developed a particular question structure which I often used whereby two opposing alternatives were presented with equal weight. For example: "Did Chief Mbonani say 'You must grow tobacco', or did he say, 'Lets grow tobacco together, so that we can develop our country'?"

Participant observation in its broadest sense was used to gain insights into the workings of local politics and culture that cannot be gained from interviews and archival research. Foremost here was my involvement with RUDA and its various community-based projects around Peramiho, which revealed much about village level political culture, as did my participation in the daily lives of the Millinga family and their neighbours. Although the insights gained were normally not directly relevant to the thesis my overall perceptions gradually evolved throughout the total period of fieldwork, which is reflected in my shift in theoretical emphasis as described above. Of greater direct relevance to the thesis was my participation on field visits of the PLUM team in ten villages in the borderlands between the new Songea and Namtumbo Districts, which transformed my attitude towards participatory development. Visits with the late Father Gerold Rupper of Peramiho Mission to his community development projects around Peramiho were also informative. Apart from the Millingas, several Tanzanian and expatriate friends in Songea helped this process along, many of whom are mentioned in the acknowledgements.

Archival work in the Tanzanian National Archives was conducted full time for two months and involved a considerable amount of photocopying of files on native affairs and agriculture in Songea for the British period. Very little remains on Songea District for the German period, but new accession numbers were examined in the archives for the first time, which contained new material on agriculture and divisional administration in the early 1960s. The photocopied material was later examined in detail, alongside extensive handwritten notes made in the archives, when back in Edinburgh. The archives of the District Commissioner in Songea town, and the District Agricultural Office were also searched over a period of one month which generated several agricultural annual reports, production statistics and donor agency documents, written primarily since Independence, that were unavailable in the National Archives. At Peramiho Mission a small archive of material produced by their printing press provided comprehensive statistics on increases in numbers of Catholics and mission schools over the last 65 years, among other interesting publications. The mission archives themselves were not examined personally, but with the generous assistance of Abbot

Lambert Doerr, himself a historian, I obtained copies of a series of chronicles from 1920 to 1955 for each mission station located on the frontiers of Ungoni, on the front-line with Islam. These were later translated from the German, and form the basis of Chapter Four.

While in UK, additional documents were obtained from Rhodes House Library, Oxford. The Library also houses a vast collection of photographs taken in Tanganyika throughout the British period by the Geographer Clement Gillman. However, efforts to locate old landscape photographs of Songea District proved largely unsuccessful. Four of Gillman's negatives were enlarged but proved to be useless for the purposes of understanding landscape change. The method has been used to great effect in the Lake Manyara region of Tanzania by Rohde and Hilhorst (2001) where the dramatic landscape had prompted many Europeans to take photographs over the last 70 years. Comparison was possible for the landscape surrounding Peramiho Mission in central Njelu which was photographed by European missionaries in 1948 and 1985 from the same spot on a nearby hill, Lipinyapinya. These are reproduced at the end of the thesis. Although comparable photographs for Undendeuli were unavailable, this pair supports all other evidence that central Njelu has been a region of relative stability in settlement and land use. The following chapters explore the significance of this observation for understanding and comparing the history, politics, and culture of the two regions.

Settlement, Society and Ethnogenesis, 1845-1897

Under British Indirect Rule, the notion of ‘tribe’ became the fundamental organising principle of local administration, along with related assumptions about the stability, homogeneity, territoriality, and permanence of African communities. Ethnicity became the recognised axis of African political expression. In order to operate within the colonial system, the contradictions between efforts to uphold this model in the face of local historical understandings needed to be negotiated by Europeans and Africans alike, even to the extent of collusion to reconstruct local histories to effect desired outcomes. There are many examples of such creative presentation of the past during Songea history, not least the Ndendeuli separatist movement in the 1950s, and, since much pre-colonial history was written around this time, we need to engage with this process when attempting to tease out historical relations in pre-colonial Songea. In turn, the ways in which these representations were constructed and contested can be seen as part of the wider discourses and processes of the dynamic relationship between frontier and metropole.

This chapter begins by examining the first Ngoni conquest of Songea by the Maseko Ngoni around 1845, and the closely linked process of Ndendeuli ethnogenesis. I explore the character of group identities before Ngoni rule, and the continuities between late-colonial constructions of local ethnicities and their representation in present-day popular historical consciousness. Secondly, I describe the demographic and political changes that took place during the military expansion of the two Ngoni Chiefdoms that grew out of the remnants of the defeated Maseko State from 1862. I focus on the factors, processes and events behind their divergent political evolution – decentralisation in Njelu and centralisation in Mshope. This in turn allowed the Mshope commoner population of Ndendeuli subjects to move eastwards beyond direct political control, providing conditions for a separate identity to emerge, and the economic, political and cultural rift between east and west Songea which eventually led to their division into two districts in July 2002. The third and fourth themes comprise a review of selected sources on social organisation in central Ngoni and the frontiers

of the Ngoni State respectively. The aim is to explore geographical variations in the character of Ngoni relations with their subjects, in an effort to understand how ethnic differences were reinforced and identities were shaped in the region, with a view to shedding light on emerging Ngoni-Ndendeuli relations.

Pre-Ngoni Songea and Ngoni Conquest, 1800-1862

The Mfecane and Maseko Ngoni Rule

The colonisation of Songea District by marauding Ngoni immigrants from Natal in the early nineteenth century has been interpreted as a consequence of competition for resources in an increasingly overcrowded environment.⁶ With the emergence of Shaka as the infamous leader of the previously insignificant Zulu, several Nguni-speaking groups were forced to migrate northwards during the 1820s (Omer-Cooper 1966:23ff). One of these, led by Mputa Maseko, travelled east of Lake Nyasa and crossed the Ruvuma River into present-day Songea around 1845, establishing a base in the Northern Matagoro Mountains at Mngongoma in the heart of what is now Undendeuli. They subordinated the local population with ease, and in doing so it seems that the Ndendeuli were created. Then the Maseko Ngoni proceeded to attack further afield, and by the 1860s some of the subject groups, including the Ndendeuli, were of sufficient size to form new independent states (Redmond 1985:23-25). Another group to travel north from Natal was the Jere, headed by Zwangendaba, which passed through present-day Zimbabwe as far as Ufipa at the northern end of Lake Nyasa. There he died around 1848, and a succession crisis precipitated the division of the group into five independent segments that came to settle throughout present-day Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia (Omer-Cooper 1966:64ff). Two groups, under Zulu Gama and Mbonani Tawete, seceded together around 1858, and settled at Mlangali (Gulliver 1956:20; Ebner 1987:62). By this time the Maseko State had been established for over a decade some 120 miles to the east, and contact between them was inevitable. Gulliver suggests that Mputa's principal followers by this time must still have been 'Ndendeuli' (1956:20). Since by this time there was just a single concentrated settlement at Mngongoma, it is possible that the designation 'Ndendeuli' could have been the equivalent of 'serf' among later Ngoni society. As such it may have been applied to all captives regardless of origin, at least during the initial years of expansion, a process which

⁶ See Peires (1983) and Hamilton (1995, 1998) for recent debates.

may have helped homogenise identities within the Ndendeuli group and set them apart from others.

Zulu and Mbonani's forces agreed to relocate to Mngongoma and submit to Maseko rule but in doing so their leaders were assassinated (Redmond 1985:28). Revenge followed shortly with the murder of Mputa and expulsion of his surviving leadership and adherents southwards across the Ruvuma as far as the southern end of Lake Nyasa (Gulliver 1956:20). Zulu and Mbonani's forces returned to Mlangali having succeeded to "liberate the various tribes of the Maseko kingdom and to make them independent" (Ebner 1987:69). But their absence from the region was short-lived. Ebner writes: "The Wandendeuli, being the most numerous and strongest tribe in the country, tried to establish their rule over the other tribes (Wandoni, Wangindo, Wanjalila, and Wapangwa) and in order to amalgamate them with their own tribe, forced them to abandon their clan names and to adopt Ndendeuli clan names instead" (Ebner 1987:72). The non-Ndendeuli groups resisted this imposition and fighting broke out. They sent messengers to Mlangali to ask the Zulu and Mbonani Ngoni for assistance, who proceeded to reconquer the region sending numerous refugees fleeing throughout southern Tanzania (Ebner 1987:72; Gulliver 1956:21; Redmond 1985:30). Matengo and Nindi groups took refuge in the Litembo mountains to the west, but the Zulu and Mbonani Ngoni were the undisputed rulers of the region. As autonomous allies they separated geographically and politically, selected new leaders from their ruling families, and established two independent polities on either side of the lower Lumecha River (Gulliver 1956:21). These became known as Mshope, ruled by Mbonani at Seluka, and Njelu, ruled by Zulu at Ngalanga, as indicated on Map 18.

Songea District Before the Arrival of Mputa Maseko

The understandings of Africans, European missionaries and officials of the character of Songea society before the arrival of the Ngoni are dominated by interlinked notions of peace, stability and a simple, egalitarian social organisation. For example, Gulliver describes how a Portuguese traveller had walked from the Zambezi to Kilwa in 1616 "and apparently found no difficulties in this extraordinary journey from the natives: in his journal he makes no mention of warlike or marauding tribes or of any warfare between peoples" (Gulliver 1954:14). Gulliver continued:

This picture accords with my own impression of pre-Ngoni conditions in this region. WaNindi, waManda and waNdendeuli informants all agree that in those days their ancestors did not know how to fight for they never in fact had occasion to do so. Anything larger than a small inter-clan or inter-

community affray was unknown. People do not attempt to disguise the fact that their tribes were speedily and easily conquered and that their forefathers meekly followed and obeyed the Ngoni. I have similar impressions of the Pangwa, Ngindo and Pogoro (Gulliver 1954:14).

Representations of this kind are almost universal in scholarly work on Songea history and present-day historical consciousness. A sharp contrast is drawn between the peace and stability of pre-Ngoni conditions and life under the constant threat of Ngoni raids, and indeed between this proud warlike tradition and the subsequent peace and stability of colonial rule following the brutal suppression of the Maji Maji rising in 1905. Only with a new generation of nationalist historians from the 1960s was this broad periodisation questioned (e.g. Mpangala 1977; cf. Kimambo 1996). It is possible that the more sensational versions of events prevailed for their inherent appeal, but also, resident European officials and missionaries may have favoured interpretations that characterised and legitimated their intervention as a civilising mission. Ngoni elite and commoners alike will have seen their military traditions as a source of prestige. Ndendeuli nationalists may knowingly construct or genuinely believe such representations in order to emphasize the injustice of their subordination and exploitation. Few would wish to downplay Ngoni militarism or highlight the continuities with the pre-Ngoni past. Yet the general tone of countless traditions cannot be discarded easily. As Iliffe says: “Historians may have exaggerated Ngoni militarism – it is a question which needs research – but the terror which Ngoni warriors inspired is beyond dispute” (Iliffe 1979:55).

Subsequent research allows a more dynamic picture of pre-Ngoni society to emerge. Iliffe describes how, by 1800, Tanzania was still being colonised by immigrants from all directions, and also points out, “So slow, complex, and unmemorable was this process that historians will never reconstruct it” (Iliffe 1979:8; see also Redmond 1985:22). And partly for this reason the process is largely absent from popular historical understandings. Furthermore, important structural changes were unfolding in the regional economy. By 1776, the first route inland from the Tanganyika coast was established from Kilwa to the relatively heavily populated areas around Lake Nyasa. The main export was ivory, followed by slaves, “drawing first on the sparse and stateless peoples of south-eastern Tanganyika and then on the Lake Nyasa area” (Iliffe 1979:40-1). Rising ivory prices throughout the nineteenth century were linked to a steady decline in elephant populations, until by 1850 the ‘ivory frontier’ passed beyond Tanzania to the African hinterland. As a result, the importance of slaves was increasing in the regional economy alongside the expansion of the Ngoni State, fueled by a concurrent increase in the supply of firearms (Iliffe 1979:42). By 1977 Mpangala was questioning Eurocentric notions of Ngoni militarism, and highlighted that the Ngoni also used

peaceful, diplomatic techniques to subdue their adherents (Mpangala 1977:13). Indeed, in 1954 Gulliver reminded us that: “Livingstone remarks how eventually the awe and fear of the Ngoni could send warning of their approach and demand captives and booty without any fighting. [...] One cannot escape the notion that the Ngoni had an easy job and that their military ability was seldom tested” (Gulliver 1954:14).

Only two writers propose that pre-Ngoni social organisation may have been more complex and hierarchical than Gulliver’s account suggests. Mpangala claims that a change was taking place from “communal” to “feudal” relations of production, although his neo-Marxist framework, and uncertain sources, cast doubt on this claim. Drawing upon Gallagher (1971), he notes that villages were presided over by *wanahota*, while a group of villages “possibly constituting one clan” was under the jurisdiction of a *mkurungwa*. Both *wanahota* and *wakurungwa* acted as arbiters of disputes, and as religious leaders “with the Mbembela priests under their control” (Mpangala 1977:10). Secondly, a tradition related in the early 1970s by Chrysostomus Makita, a former Matengo chief, refers to a series of conflicts, “fought with spears, axes and bill-hooks”, before the arrival of the Maseko Ngoni, between Makita’s Nindi ancestors and “people called the Ndondi” from the area of present-day Songea town. The presence of such insecurity forced Makita’s people to live in stockaded settlements in the Litembo Mountains, in present-day Mbinga District (Basehart 1972:89).

In contrast, a conversation between the missionary W.P. Johnson and an aging Mchinga Yao in the mid-1880s, reveals a rosier version of the past:

... his face would light up as he described the good old days when he was a boy, when each of the many streams we had crossed, and were to cross, was the site of a village, when strangers could pass from one end of the country to another, and Indian corn, rice and goats abounded; he dwelt on the social life, the free hospitality, the ready transit, the giving food and receiving news in turn that then prevailed; before the Alolo had come upon them from beyond the Lujenda, and driven some north, some south – a people very fierce and barbarous, whose language he tried to imitate (Johnson 1884:518).

The location of this encounter was west of the Upper Lujenda, probably on the old Kilwa-Nyasa trade route, south of present-day Tunduru District. The dreaded Alolo were probably part of a group that had learnt to imitate Ngoni techniques. Although we can construct a more dynamic picture of pre-Ngoni society in Songea District, which hints at hierarchical social organisation, the basic tone of Gulliver’s account appears to be largely valid. Indeed, perhaps the most persuasive evidence is the very lack of it – the ‘absence of history.’ The ambiguity regarding the nature of pre-Ngoni society has allowed particular representations to be favoured that support certain interests. However, as we shall see, these efforts also needed to

make sense within the conceptual constraints of a tribal model of ethnicity, stressing boundedness and permanence.

Representations of Pre-Ngoni Ethnicity

The apparently effortless subordination of the communities surrounding Mngongoma by Maseko's forces is intimately linked to the emergence of the Ndendeuli as a separate ethnic group, and the character of their relations with the Ngoni. Oral traditions will tell us that, before the Ngoni wars, "The Ndendeuli did not know what tribe they were" (Gallagher 1971:418). Numerous sources claim that the Ndendeuli were originally Ngindo- or Ndonde-speaking peoples (who now inhabit the country to the east) and that their ethnic identity, and even the name 'Ndendeuli,' were derived during this initial encounter with the Ngoni, "from the frequent, forlorn utterance of 'what are we to do', in their language, something akin to 'ndendeuli'" (Gulliver 1956:29). In this way the name 'Ndendeuli' is seen as a symbol of humiliation and a reminder of their conquest and subordination, a construction shared by Ngoni and Ndendeuli alike. Thus, Mustafa Mang'unyuka, a prominent Ndendeuli separatist in the 1950s, and later TANU leader, explained: "Even the name Wandendeuli was not a tribe, but a phrase disparagingly made by the Ngoni who were imitating what they thought the Wandendeuli were saying all the time – 'what shall I do?' meaning in other words 'I can't help myself! I can't depend on myself'" (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). In contrast, an Mndendeuli living among the predominantly Bena population of northern Songea District, an area which was also historically under Ngoni rule but some distance from the centres of Ndendeuli 'nationalism' during the 1950s, casts the Ndendeuli in a more positive light: "The name 'Wandendeuli' – it is an attitude of not cooperating. It means, 'what will you do with me?!'" Those people had to be forced because they really had the attitude that the rulers couldn't do anything with them" (Hilary Ngonyani, 3/8/01, Madaba). These contradictory interpretations of resistance and submission were brought together coherently in a single tradition recounted by the MP who represents the majority of Ndendeuli:

[The Maseko Ngoni] were looking for a place, and went to the mountains around Hanga... The Ngoni stayed in these mountains because they wanted to know who those people were living below – how strong they were. They were Ndonde-speaking peoples, who were not led by chiefs or kings – they were stateless. Maybe they were originally from Kilwa or Liwale. They [Ngoni] wanted to know 'who are they?' The people living below them said in their language 'what will they do to me?', in other words, 'they cant do anything to us!' and they relaxed, drank beer and so on. It was said with a sort of arrogance. They said 'wandendevuu?' Then the Ngoni descended onto them – like lightening! They had been at ease, but were surprised by the

attack. And instead of 'wandendevuu', they started saying 'titendawuli?' which means 'what shall we do now?' In other words, 'we are caught, and they are oppressing us!' So now they were ashamed (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam).

Thus, in a real sense, the Ndendeuli were created by the act of Ngoni conquest. 'Ndendeuli' as an identity is seen to have been imposed upon them in ways that stress their subordination and humiliation, but leave room for interpretations that recover some dignity and reflect a willingness to resist. No other local ethnic group has such a politically-charged name: 'Matengo' is said to mean 'forest', 'Nyanja' refers to Lake Nyasa, the word 'Nyasa' itself being a common Bantu word for lake (Gulliver 1956:29, Ebner 1987:43, Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam). The politicised and contested meanings of 'Ndendeuli' reveal the fundamental importance of their ongoing political struggles with their Ngoni conquerors to the popular consciousness of Ndendeuli identity.

Late-colonial writers on Songea history needed to negotiate the tensions between their own historical evidence of pre-Ngoni society with the conceptual constraints imposed by a tribal model of ethnicity. Thus, Gulliver describes the "amorphous and rudimentary" social organisation before Ngoni conquest:

In fact there were no compact tribes or perhaps even tribal territories; certainly there were no chiefs or any kind of centralised political organisation. The traditional system was probably based on fairly small kin-groups who lived sparsely scattered over a wide area with much uninhabited country. There seems to have been a good deal of movement under the primitive slash-and-burn cultivation system, and loyalties became increasingly diffuse (Gulliver 1954:14).

However, elsewhere he writes, "approximately eight ethnic groups can be discerned to have lived in the region at the time of the arrival of the Maseko Ngoni in 1845" (Gulliver 1956:29). He suggests that: "Terms such as Ndendeuli or Manda, for instance, must have stood for vague geographical areas whose inhabitants recognised relatively more cultural homogeneity among themselves than with outsiders. There could have been in no sense any specific Ndendeuli or Manda tribal resistance to the invading Ngoni" (Gulliver 1954:14). Of course Ndendeuli was not the best example to use since their creation through the act of conquest seems to be so certain, but it is hard to reconcile the picture of diffuse identities with Gulliver's eight ethnic groups. As he notes, ethnic designations were likely to have been relative to the geographical location and political context of the referent, and inconducive to the synoptic perspective demanded of colonial administrators.

Unsurprisingly, Gulliver's inventory of eight pre-Ngoni tribes, and the concurrent research by the resident missionary, Ebner, reveal many inconsistencies, and has a curious resemblance to contemporary locations of tribes, but with the glaring exception of the Ndendeuli, who were, of course, 'created' by the Ngoni. Thus we learn that Ndendeuli merged imperceptibly with the Ndonde and Ngindo peoples to the east, but were also augmented by immigrants from Upangwa to the north-west. Meanwhile, Ndendeuli and their Matengo neighbours to the west were originally the same tribe with the same language. Yet Matengo were in fact largely immigrant Nindi from the south, augmented by Pangwa from the north, Manda on the north-eastern Lake Nyasa shore and a few from the western shore. The Nyanja, also on the eastern shore, were really from two groups – the Mwera ('people of the south') and Mpoto ('people of the north'). The former originated west of the lake where they shared a language with the Anyanja, while the latter were largely of Matengo origin and spoke Kimatengo, while both groups also included elements of Nindi and Pangwa. Finally, the Nindi originated on the Msinge River, a tributary of the Ruvuma in north-west Mozambique, but several groups migrated north to various places including the Matagoro Mountains (near present-day Songea town in what was then Undendeuli), Liger (south of Undendeuli), and south of Liparamba (possibly near where Maseko crossed the Ruvuma in 1845). Comparison of languages in the 1950s further enhanced the sense of relatedness, demonstrating close affinities between Kimatengo and Kindendeuli; between Kindendeuli, Kinindi, Kingindo and Kindonde, and between Kindendeuli and Kipangwa. Kinindi was judged to be essentially the same as Kimatengo with an added mixture of Kiyao (Gulliver 1956:29-30; Ebner 1987:41-51).

Ebner's admirable efforts to make sense of the extraordinarily complex and fluid nature of social organisation and identity is seen with his analysis of Ndendeuli and Matengo relations. First he draws on Ndendeuli oral tradition:

According to their tradition, their country formerly, before the immigration of the Wangoni, extended farther to the west than it does now. This fact is confirmed by a number of names of rivers and mountains lying in the country occupied by the Wangoni today. [...] The names of these rivers is of Ndendeuli origin... Moreover, near Matimira Mission, in a country which now belongs entirely to the Wangoni tribe, there is a mountain called Nanyimbo. Nyimbo is a clan name of the Wandendeuli. The name of the mountain indicates that the country around that mountain was formerly inhabited by people of the Wandendeuli tribe. The same may be said of the Humbaro mountains which lie to the south of Mpitimbi Mission. Humbaro is also a clan name of the Wandendeuli (Ebner 1987:43-44).

Secondly, he lists Kimatengo and Kindendeuli words and phrases, presumably as employed in the 1950s, revealing remarkable similarities (Ebner 1987:44-6). It is not clear if these languages would have been different before 1845, and indeed whether or not it was possible to talk of two languages. Nevertheless, this evidence, combined with his informants' oral tradition, allowed Ebner to conclude:

The Wandendeuli and Wamatengo were originally one tribe with the same language and the same origin. That tribe was not organized into a political union and had no common chief and it consisted of a number of clans and families scattered all over the region from the Matengo mountains in the west, over what is now the Ungoni country, to the present territory of the Wandendeuli in the east and north-east... When the Wangoni immigrated into the Songea District... the tribe was divided into two halves: the Wamatengo in the west and the Wandendeuli in the east and north-east (Ebner 1959:46).

This is a bold effort to understand ethnicity within the tribal model of ethnogenesis in the face of contradictory historical evidence. The idea that Matengo and Ndendeuli were the same tribe with the same language does not lead Ebner to question the validity of his previous assertion that rivers and mountains in contemporary Ungoni were really Ndendeuli clan names, as opposed to Matengo names. More importantly, the fact that his Ndendeuli informants were engaged in a protracted struggle over land rights with the Ngoni throughout the 1950s did not lead him to consider that Ndendeuli 'tradition' was being actively constructed in line with their contemporary understandings, if not knowingly invented to suit their political ends (Ranger 1983). Ndendeuli oral histories reveal efforts to negotiate contradictions between their acknowledged historical origins and the need to claim continuity with some kind of territorially-defined social entity that predates Ngoni conquest, and sets them apart from neighbouring groups. Only by demonstrating this continuity and autonomy could they legitimise their nationalist project in the 1950s and its associated claims to land stolen from them by the Ngoni. Surprisingly perhaps, the same late-colonial constructions are still in use in popular discourse. In 2001, an Ndendeuli elder was among several who gave the following kind of tradition:

There was no tribe by the name of Wandendeuli. These people are Wangindo. They were sharing their border with the Wamanda and Wamatengo at a place called Kitai. The place was marked by a mountain called Nalihu. At that place they would meet once a year to confer on various issues. To mark that place they would bring ashes, from their home places, and leave them there. [...] When the Ngoni came here they caused the Wandendeuli to retreat eastwards. The Wamatengo were fought unsuccessfully by the Wangoni so the Wamatengo went to the mountains and

were able to defend themselves by rolling huge stones onto the Ngoni army. They settled there (Ali Swalei 'B', 17/7/01, Songea town).

As well as strengthening Ndendeuli claims for land during the conflict with Mshope Ngoni which dragged on throughout the late 1950s over boundary demarcation of their new Native Authority, this tradition assisted the Matengo on the other side of Ungoni in their parallel efforts to appropriate Njelu Ngoni land. They were able to argue that prior to Ngoni conquest their land stretched as far as an unambiguous and permanent boundary with the Ndendeuli, and thus in 1963 when Ngoni and Matengo were eventually divided by the formation of Mbinga District the boundary ran close to Nalihi. Without denying that Nalihi had some ritual and territorial significance, the historical validity of a boundary between two discrete social groups at that time is questionable.

Rather than claiming that representations of the past were cynically invented in order to further local political struggles, I suggest that this bounded, territorially-defined, and stable conception of pre-Ngoni Songea is sincerely held, and embedded in wider understandings of society and history. These were shaped during British Indirect Rule at a time when ethnicity as defined by a tribal model was the most recognised form of political expression. For example, when I asked one valuable informant, a long-time Nyasa resident of Njelu Ngoni, "Why did the Ngoni settle in this area? Was it for strategic reasons?" His answer surprised me: "Maybe the Ngoni settled here because they wanted to be between the two main tribes here – the Wandendeuli and Wamatengo. The border between them is not far from here" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/6/02, Peramiho). The persistence of this understanding despite forty years of 'anti-tribalism' under Nyerere must be linked to the continuation of local ethnic struggles. Part of the purpose of this thesis is to explore the reasons why these struggles have endured, and the extent to which they can be seen as manifestations of relations between frontier and metropole in Songea history.

Demographic and Political Change, 1862-1897

Military Expansion in Njelu and Mshope

After their establishment in Songea around 1862, the two autonomous Ngoni States – Mshope and Njelu – consolidated and expanded considerably, with increasing emphasis on the formation of satellite settlements under indirect control through local representatives who were visited for payment of tribute (Redmond 1985:87). As a result, a considerable area was

apparently left bare in the centre of southern Tanzania (Redmond 1985:38). Njelu raided to the south, west and north-west, especially against the Pangwa (who today form the largest ethnicity within the former Ngoni Njelu Chiefdom), Nindi and Matengo in the Litembo hills, and the scattered populations hiding along the Nyasa Lake Shore (Gulliver 1954:10; Redmond 1985:35). Meanwhile, the Mshope focused on neighbouring Ndendeuli populations and related Ngindo groups to the east, and the Bena to the north. In doing so they interfered with the ambitions of the Hehe, centred on Iringa to the north who proceeded to attack both Ngoni Chiefdoms in 1878 and again in 1881 killing Nkosi Chipeta of Mshope and decimating the Ngoni forces. With their raiding lands now partially cut off, Mshope failed to expand as rapidly as Njelu who were able to relocate to the south and extend their operations into Mozambique as far as the Indian Ocean (Redmond 1985:52-56).

Redmond estimates that there were perhaps 1500 in the original Zulu-Mbonani group that settled in Songea after expulsion of the Maseko Ngoni and that by the early 1880s there were about 8000 people in Mshope and up to 12,000 in Njelu (Redmond 1985:49). According to travellers reports in the mid-1890s, the settled areas of Njelu and Mshope were thickly populated, with between 1000 and 2200 huts at the Njelu capital Mlamira and several neighbouring villages with between 400 and 500 huts (Ebner 1987:135). Approximately one-third of the landscape was under cultivation. The population of Njelu was estimated to be between 50,000 and 60,000 (Kjekshus 1977a:40), although a German census in 1904 put the population of Njelu at 36,000.⁷ It appears that an estimate of some 60,000 is plausible for the total Ngoni population at the turn of the century, while by 1948 the total official Ngoni population had increased to 106,000, with 31,000 in Mshope and 75,000 in Njelu (Gulliver 1974:83). By this time, the proportion which claimed direct descent through the male line with immigrants from outside Tanzania, i.e. 'old Ngoni', was approximately 15 percent, while about 2.5 percent claimed 'true Ngoni' origins in South African (Gulliver 1974:83). Three points must be made that have important implications for understanding settlement patterns, social organisation and political control. First, there was a population expansion of the two Ngoni Chiefdoms from perhaps 1500 to 60,000 in the space of 40 years. Secondly Mshope was probably always significantly smaller than Njelu, and thirdly the ruling families were always a tiny proportion of the population, and increasingly so as military expansion progressed.

With efforts to retain political stability during such rapidly changing circumstances, the political organisation of the two Chiefdoms diverged, leading to decentralisation in Njelu and centralisation in Mshope. The internal politics within respective ruling families provides a convincing if partial understanding for this divergence, and has been analysed by Gulliver (1974). In Njelu, the important insight is that the power of successive nkosi's was always diminished by his structural position between a number of powerful ndunas (military lieutenants). When Zulu died around 1860 a number of potential successors had also recently died or departed, leaving his eldest son, Hawayi, to take over, but his experience justified his close supervision by four important ndunas. By the time of Hawayi's death in 1874, the Chiefdom was still located within a single concentrated settlement at Ngalanga, although, with its expansion, agricultural land was depleting to the point when a more dispersed settlement pattern was required (see Map 18).⁸ Thereafter, the chiefly village and its satellite settlements overseen by each nduna shifted independently in response to land requirements. Around this time, other organising features were decentralised. The notion of a single 'chiefs army' disappeared, and regiments were increasingly organised around individual segments and their ndunas with their own age-regiments, and first fruit ceremonies for the whole Chiefdom were abandoned. These changes provided further opportunities for ndunas to assert greater autonomy (Gulliver 1974:86-88).

Hawayi's death in 1874 led to a straightforward succession of his younger brother, Mharule, but in line with the decentralised structure that had already developed, his authority was still primarily restricted to his autonomous segment. Seven segments had now emerged, under Mharule, Mlamilo, Putire, Chombera, Chikuse, Magagura and Mpambalioto. Raiding expeditions were increasingly organised independently, with the Chief providing a coordinating function. A proportion of war captives and booty was given to the Chief, but most was divided within each segment, giving considerable control to leading ndunas, leaving relatively little patronage for the Chief to allocate beyond his immediate segment. During Mharule's reign, three further segments were formed from members of the royal family on the far side of Lake Nyasa who had formed part of Zwangendaba's original group. The old and weak Mlamilo ruled for ten years from 1889 but failed to strengthen central control over the Chiefdom (Gulliver 1974:91). By this time Nduna Songea was the most powerful leader in Njelu with the largest segment of the population (Gulliver 1974:88-91). He was forming

⁷ Ebner (1987:136) appears to be referring here to both Chiefdoms but the figure is more likely to be referring to Njelu only.

his own relations with Arab traders and Europeans, upon whom he made a great impression (Redmond 1985:71). With another succession dispute following Mlamilo's death in 1899, tensions were serious enough in the mid-1890s for Captain Tom Von Prince to observe that Njelu was "ripe for a German military takeover" (Redmond 1985:79).

Meanwhile, Nkosi Mbonani of the northern Chiefdom of Mshope had been of lower status than his Njelu counterpart, and probably led a smaller band of adherents into Upangwa after the secession from Zwangendaba's group around 1858. He had only one nduna and the lack of rivals meant that his death in 1862 brought on a straightforward succession of his eldest son, Chipeta. The Chiefdom was thus freed from internal division and formed a compact settlement at Seluka. Furthermore, Chipeta's younger brothers died before rising to lead segments, while his cousin, Mpepo, was kept under control. Chipeta led raiding parties, strictly controlled allocation of captives and booty, and restricted opportunities for potential rivals. His death during the first Hehe war in 1878 led to a long succession dispute between his two eldest sons, Chabruma and Palangu, that was never fully resolved and lived on through their respective descendents until after National Independence with important consequences for Ndendeuli politics, as we shall see in Chapter Seven. Meanwhile, having failed to claim Chipeta's wealth, his cousin started a brief civil war and eventually seceded and settled near Kilosa 80 miles to the north with 2000 adherents, one fourth of the Mshope Chiefdom. As a result one of the very few potential rivals to power had been removed, but the population was substantially reduced (Gulliver 1974:92-93, Redmond 1985:60).

Chabruma came to be Nkosi and could continue his father's autocratic control over what was effectively a single major segment, ensuring that his few ndunas lived close by at Mtukano. As with Njelu, the entire Chiefdom would be forced to locate after some dozen years due to depletion of available bush for shifting agriculture within the compact settlement, and around the time of the second Hehe war they transferred some fifteen miles westwards to Old Gumbiro. Most importantly, however, by this time the commoner population had begun to move in the opposite direction and settle in dispersed groups in particular along the upper Luegu River (see Maps 19 and 20). The motive was certainly partly to obtain virgin agricultural land, but the first Hehe war may have forced Chabruma to realise the dangers in locating all adherents in a single place. However, with Chabruma's ndunas still residing at the capital, the commoners were also freeing themselves from direct Ngoni control, although headmen were probably appointed from within these communities (Gulliver 1974:93-94; Redmond 1985:82). Chabruma's autocratic regime also accounts for the relatively little

⁸ Appendix 2 gives the names and periods of rule for successive nkosis in Njelu and Mshope from 1862 until the position of chief was abolished at the end of 1962.

contact which is said to have taken place with Mshope by traders, missionaries and, later, German officials (Gulliver 1974:94).

The crucial outcome of this eastward move of the commoner population was that their experience of Mshope Ngoni rule came to be markedly different from that experienced by commoners with closer proximity to the centre of power. Their identity as separate – physically and socially – could be strengthened. There was a common sense of subordination to the ‘true’ Ngoni elite, but it is uncertain that this was expressed or felt in terms of a unified Ndendeuli identity. Nevertheless, as described in Chapter Three, their autonomy was sufficiently apparent for the German administration to reject Chabruma’s claim to authority, and an alien Akida of coastal origin was appointed to administer them (Gulliver 1974:95). Chabruma’s decision to allow his Ndendeuli subjects to be freed from direct political control was the moment when the historical trajectories of east and west Songea District began to diverge, a process ultimately leading to its division in July 2002.

Two Models of Pre-Colonial Settlement

Gulliver’s assertion that the Ndendeuli were able to live in scattered communities with relatively little control from the Mshope headquarters rests uneasily alongside the broad picture of life on the frontiers of the Ngoni State obtained from other accounts. Were people cowering in stockaded settlements in fear of capture and sale into slavery, or could they live relatively freely, scattered throughout the countryside like the Ndendeuli? Iliffe points out that the increased availability of firearms from the 1860s “caused ribbon-like settlements along the trade routes to give way to fortified villages” (Iliffe 1979:75). He speculates that “stockaded settlements probably strengthened the authority of political leaders, and more control of the young by their elders”. What can we conclude about the quality of life at the frontiers as opposed to the centre of the Ngoni State?

Given the important political, economic and cultural changes that were taking place, it is difficult to generalise about the geography of the two Ngoni Chiefdoms. In other central African Ngoni groups scholars highlight the clear distinction between ‘Ngoni’ and ‘Non-Ngoni’ social identities. Within the metropole of Ngoni groups in Malawi, Margaret Read wrote how, “they developed a strong sense of coherence, a devotion to law and peaceful order – the exact opposite of their relationships with external groups. Violence or insulting behaviour of any kind, even towards the most lowly member of the community, was deplored and the ideal of personal behaviour was one of peaceableness and orderly living reminiscent of the Roman ‘gravitas’” (Read 1938). The distinction was reflected in settlement patterns of a given Chiefdom. Drawing from Barnes, Omer-Cooper writes of the Mpezeni Ngoni west of

Lake Nyasa: “The Ngoni attacked their neighbours almost indiscriminately and their settlements were often surrounded by tracts of devastated country, outside which other peoples looked on them with universal fear and hatred” (Omer-Cooper 1966:72). Indeed, Barnes gives a sketch map of the Ngoni Chiefdom, which straddled the present-day Malawi-Zambia border, as surrounded by an uninhabited ring of “no-man’s land” about 20 miles across (Barnes 1954:67). In marked contrast, Iliffe offers an alternative image of the pre-colonial state: “African states were webs of relationships which grew steadily weaker with distance from the capital until they merged into the statelessness of peripheral peoples” (Iliffe 1979:25). Which of these extremes was the case in Songea? What was the social and spatial organisation of Ngoni society and its tributary settlements?

Life at the Centre

Social and Spatial Organisation

Historians of pre-colonial Ngoni society have all highlighted a distinction between ‘true’ Ngoni and the commoner population, or *sutu*. ‘True’ Ngoni was, and still is, an emic category, referring to those who trace direct descent to people who were incorporated into Ngoni society outside present-day Tanzania. Social rank increases the further south one can claim assimilation into Zwangendaba’s band of immigrants. Thus the Ngoni ruling families, Gama in Njelu and Tawete in Mshope, were originally from Swaziland or Natal. The hereditary position of chief in both Njelu and Mshope was called *nkosi*, and beneath him were a number of *ndunas* with varying degrees of autonomy, as we have seen. During pre-colonial times, before the introduction of the category ‘jumbe’, each *nduna* was supported by a number of *madoda* (s. *lidoda*). These were men who “stood out as good soldiers, wise counsellors or heads of larger kin-groups” (Gulliver 1954:18). Each was responsible for organising and leading raiding expeditions, and the captives they acquired became followers through a process of integration, who gave personal allegiance to their new superior. Gulliver describes this arrangement as “a kind of feudal system with the allegiances and obligations of service reminiscent of medieval Europe” although there was never to be a strong link with land rights (Gulliver 1954:19). Beneath the *madoda*, the majority of the population was designated *sutu*, roughly translating as ‘serf’, who generally resided in or near the households of their captors (Gulliver 1954:18-19). Gulliver describes the *sutu* as “entirely at the mercy of their *ndunas*” whose power was “supreme and often savage”. However, *sutu* were able to “climb the status ladder by capturing and being allowed to retain captives, cattle, etc.” and

establish themselves as important *madoda* with their own band of adherents residing separately from their superiors, but always available for military and other services. Gulliver gives a sense of how *sutu* responded to this regime by actively assimilating themselves: “It must also be said that many captives became enthusiastic new-Ngoni, aping their masters in what both agreed was the superior life and culture of Ngoni society. Serfs whole-heartedly adopted Ngoni attitudes and techniques in warfare” (Gulliver 1954:19-20).

We begin to see the difficulties of a homogenised conception of *sutu* life and their relations with their superiors, yet all historical accounts are based upon a strong distinction between the two classes. We are told that segregation between them was enhanced by restriction of social mixing and prevention of intermarriage (Mpangala 1977:23; Redmond 1985:51). The wearing of certain ornaments and clothes became powerful status symbols and few *sutu* dared to break these norms (Redmond 1985:88). Retrospective accounts of economic stratification further highlight the sense of two distinct classes. Thus we hear that almost 90 percent of cattle belonged to the ruling class. Few serfs owned cattle although some had between 10 and 30, while “An average member of the aristocracy could own between 200 and 300 heads of cattle, and 50 to 100 goats” (Mpangala 1977:22). Redmond points out that there was a range of roles played by *sutu* in the Ngoni economy: “While some boys watched livestock and trained as warriors, others might become mere labourers or porters” (Redmond 1985:88). Yet the notion of just two distinct classes remains. He continues by arguing that, “the disparity between the ‘true Ngoni’ and ‘sutu’ probably became more accentuated during these years as the kingdoms grew in size and wealth and as new contacts, such as that with coastal peoples, brought new opportunities” (Redmond 1985:88). In contrast, I would suggest that these changes brought greater social complexity.

There is little doubt that the first stage of incorporation was particularly unenviable, as reported by Hafliger in 1901: “the lot of the captured slave is rather hard. First of all, he had his ear pierced, or simply had an ear lobe cut off, that they might know him to be a slave... In the plundering expeditions, they had to carry the booty, to cook, above all to be servants. In addition to this, they had to do all the field work while the Wangoni went celebrating every other day” (quoted in Redmond 1985:88). This narrative is a fundamental part of popular historical consciousness in present-day Songea, and at times brought forward into the colonial period to support general grievances about Ngoni rule. For those destined to become military leaders, incorporation meant a comprehensive reworking of attitudes and ambitions. Johnson describes the training procedure for one who later became a warrior and then a tribute collector: “... he was drilled and taught to despise and mock at any man who ran away or had wounds behind. ‘If you can see men, they can be smitten’ was a maxim he learned” (Johnson 1922:111-2).

Settlement patterns within Ngoni villages were closely linked to Ngoni social structure. As discussed above and indicated in Maps 18 to 20, from the 1880s Njelu comprised a number of settlements representing each major segment, each surrounded by farmland and forest. Not surprisingly, the nucleus of each village was the nkosi's or nduna's residence, itself located within a complex of huts centred on a cattle kraal. On either side stood the huts of senior wives along with the 'house of the spirits', their entrances facing the centre. This core was surrounded by clusters of homesteads, possibly similarly positioned according to status, belonging to particular clans of lower status. The village was not fenced or fortified, but loosely arranged, surrounded by a ring of fields which contained satellite settlements, called *milaga* (s. *mlaga*), comprising the majority of the *sutu* population. *Milaga* were overseen by individuals appointed by the nkosi or nduna from among their residents. These were the *madoda*. The installation of the junior wives of the nkosi or nduna as residents in some of these settlements increased political control and improved administration (Ebner 1987:178-9). What emerges here is a close-knit, segmented, hierarchical social and spatial organisation with characteristics that contrasted greatly with contemporary Ndendeuli communities, elements of which can be seen in historical centres of power in present-day Njelu.

The hierarchical organisation and authoritarian political culture appears to have been reflected in agricultural performance, prompting several early travellers to praise the Ngoni and Matengo farming practices. Lieder wrote in 1897:

Nowhere in east Africa have I seen such well tended fields as in Ngoniland. During the hoeing season, people come out in long lines and dig with their huge hoes – their long handles are swung with both hands – to prepare approximately 2-metre broad seedbeds which are planted. In the execution of these ridges the fields gain a completely European appearance (quoted in Kjekshus 1977a:40).

There was evidence of agroforestry and agropastoralism integrated into a medium-fallow system that was seen to surpass the long-fallow shifting agriculture of coastal groups. All around there were "signs of man's industrious hands" and these favourable impressions influenced European missionaries in their decisions to settle in the region (Kjekshus 1977a:40). Access to land was controlled by the head of each major settlement who would grant permission, but, once allocated, rights were secure so long as the land was being utilised. A proportion of land was reserved for the ruling households who summoned *sutu* to work their fields in return for beer or meat. *Sutu* fields were also worked communally: "Men and women, indiscriminately mixed, worked in long rows on the fields tilling the soil" (Ebner 1987:188). We are left with a strong impression of orderliness, discipline and industry, and

this must be borne in mind when we examine changing representations of Ngoni agriculture under colonial rule.

Political control and social incorporation into the Ngoni Chiefdoms were linked to patterns of indigenous religious belief and practice. Mpangala asserts that, with the coming of the Ngoni, alongside the pre-existing clan worship, “one supreme Ancestor had to be recognised throughout the kingdom” called Mama Nasere. She became “a symbol of national unity” with the establishment of huts of worship at chiefly villages (Mpangala 1977:24). Religious functions linked to Mama Nasere included “preparation for and celebrating success in war and the ceremony of incorporating captives into the Ngoni society”, while influential religious leaders emerged in each kingdom (Mapunda and Mpangala 1969:9). Engagement with these beliefs and practices must have been linked to the character of incorporation and emerging identities in different geographical areas, and it is tempting to propose that the Ndendeuli in eastern Mshope resisted these practices. Iliffe claims that, “Ndendeuli resistance to Ngoni conquest was led by prophets who took as their names the attributes of God: Chapanga (the Creator), Ngalwala (the Immortal), Mwenekazi (the Almighty)” (Iliffe 1979:65). Possibly, the Ndendeuli, as original colonisers of the land, may have retained rainmaking and other ritual functions, and thus some influence over the Ngoni elite in the absence of military power.⁹ However, the notion of resistance by one ethnic group against ideological hegemony by another may be inappropriate for two reasons. First, adherence to indigenous religions is probably not best characterised as religious conversion in the sense applied to Islam or Christianity involving an ‘all-or-nothing’ choice. Secondly it is uncertain that these scattered Ndendeuli communities had by this time a shared ethnic identity constructed in opposition to the metropole.

The picture emerging from these accounts is one of considerable social stratification, reflected in the organisation of settlement at different spatial scales. Although historians and oral traditions invariably stress the distinction between ‘true’ Ngoni and *sutu*, it must be remembered that the former represented a tiny minority. Also *sutu* was itself a highly differentiated category depending primarily on descent, but also age, gender, and ability. At the level of Ngoni society as a whole, opportunities for integration were partly a function of distance from the centres of power, as discussed below. Finally, we must appreciate that Ungoni was changing, and so were its social relations, as a complex, integrated society evolved. A clear indication of this was how the Kingoni language of the ‘true’ Ngoni, which closely resembled contemporary Kizulu, rapidly merged with the various dialects of the *sutu* population in Njelu to form Kisutu, or ‘new Kingoni’. In 1904 the ‘old Kingoni’ was still

spoken by the elite, but falling from use (Redmond 1985:51). In Njelu, Kisutu most closely resembled Kipangwa, while the equivalent of Kisutu in Mshope resembled Kindendeuli, reflecting ethnic composition.

Life on the Frontiers

Ndendeuli under Ngoni Rule

Only the briefest of visits were made by Europeans to Mshope before colonial rule, and then only in the late 1890s. However, an oral history of two Ndendeuli Jumbes, Mabukasera and Hangahanga, recorded in 1938, gives powerful evidence in support of Gulliver's account of Mshope centralisation and an eastwards movement of Ndendeuli commoners from around 1880. Thus, we learn that the original impetus to move east, away from Mshope political control, was indeed the search for new land. Groups of Ndendeuli were under the authority of ndunas who resided at the capital, and tribute collection was organised by royal wives whose relationship with their subjects had a patron-client character. Later we are told:

Before Mpepo left Songea we went to fight the Wangindo under Nakunjara. Chabruma sent Manjoro to command the expedition. All the Wandendeule from the Hanga and the Ruwegu went. Palango also brought his men. We obtained a lot of slaves and sold them to the Arabs for cloth. [...] Then there came the second war against the Wangindo under Nakinjara, Mbebetu and Nanjechele. Many were caught and sold as slaves. Manjoro and Palango were both there. The Inkosi sent one Mahangawana to command the expedition. There was also a third expedition on which both Manjoro and Palango both came. The Inkosi sent one Pambuka to run this expedition. There was a fourth expedition under Kilembo and a fifth under Huwahuwa. Palango and Manjoro were on both of these expeditions. All these expeditions were very successful and we got many slaves. During all these raids we were still living on the Ruwegu. After the last raid we crossed the Ruegu. [...] Then we went off to the Muhoro river to catch some more Wangindo. [...] Chabruma led this expedition himself and both Palango and Manjoro were present. One of Chabrumas men Mahupa, had gone to Kilwa to exchange slaves for cloth. As he was returning he met the expedition and told Chabruma how he had seen the Germans land at Kilwa and defeat Makungara. When Chabruma heard this he decided to terminate the expedition and return to Songea (RH/Mss.Afr.s.585).

⁹ See Iliffe 1979:28. Ranger (1996:213ff) describes comparable relations between indigenous Tonga and Ndebele conquerors.

This passage suggests that the entire Ndendeuli population was under relatively direct political control and the warriors of the entire population would participate together in major slave raids against their Ngindo neighbours. These Ndendeuli were probably divided into just two groups, led in battle by the senior Ndunas Manjoro and Palangu. Chabruma himself however did not always participate, but if he did so he would lead the raid. The dispersed Ndendeuli settlement pattern seems to have been entirely acceptable to the Mshope leadership and their military policies, with about five raiding expeditions taking place between about 1881 and 1890 while residing in scattered groups in the Luegu valley. There is also a sense that Ndendeuli were willing participants and beneficiaries in the military way of life, with phrases like “very successful” raids, and “we got many slaves”. Also we see how the ethnic categories ‘Ndendeuli’ and ‘Ngindo’ (once an undifferentiated population) defined whether an individual was slave-raider or potential slave, ally or foe, a distinction at times between life and death. Herein lies the process whereby ethnic identities, emerging from 1845, were unambiguously reinforced. While their scattered distribution will have weakened the sense of unity, this will certainly have been strengthened by participation every couple of years in slave raiding expeditions which sometimes brought together warriors and porters from throughout the entire population in a shared experience of Ngoni rule. There is little doubt that these Ndendeuli communities were part of the Ngoni State although the character of their incorporation is not clear. However, inferences can be made from accounts of Ngoni relations with other neighbours.

Satellite Settlements in Southern Njelu

The British missionary W.P. Johnson was the first to visit Njelu in 1883, travelling from Chigoma on the eastern shore of Lake Nyasa in present-day Mozambique. While passing through the Msinje Valley his party encountered their first Ngoni (or ‘Gwangwara’) satellite settlements, some 100 miles south of Njelu. Johnson recalls: “Then we came to small villages of subject peoples that had been established as if by miniature Babylonian conquerors, here a Gindo village, there a Yao village, peopled by captives from these tribes” (Johnson 1924:94). After crossing the Ruvuma River, probably near Mitomoni, they encountered a Nindi village dependent on the Ngoni approximately one day’s walk south of the first Njelu settlements near present-day Mpitimbi. We learn that the purpose of these settlements was for captives to cultivate for their Ngoni masters, who were not resident, but threatened to raid at any time creating a constant atmosphere of fear. Former identities such as Nindi and Donde were actively retained, and one Donde group appreciated Johnson’s efforts to fraternise them with a display of Donde dancing his guides had learnt from the coast. But the youth were changing

with the times: “These Nindi, at least the boys, had the Gwangwara scanty dress of skins, and top hat of feathers” (Johnson 1884:523). The next day Johnson’s party crossed the Ruvuma for a second time and encountered “the first Zulu village”. He wrote: “The people were evidently afraid of us, and we could only get information by sending a man out alone to question children” (Johnson 1884:524). Eventually they met with elders, probably including Nduna Songea (Johnson 1924:96). The event appears to have been brief, cordial, but unremarkable, and contrasts with their fearful reputation. They continued directly to Lake Nyasa via Amakita’s in Umatengo, passing various other tributary settlements:

As with the Donde and Nindi so with the Yao; we found these settled near Songea, and cultivating the land and paying tribute. So they deal with all who do homage to them. To do this is “Kugwira mwendo,” that is, seize the chief’s leg. They seem to deal in the same way with Amakita. There are elements of good in the system but they afflict all too much (Johnson 1884:524).

The phrase *Kugwira mwendo* reveals the dependent character of these satellite villages. Although they were being ‘afflicted’, they were also being repaid with military protection. Five years later, Reverend Smythies encountered a mission to collect tribute led by one of Nduna Songea’s headmen in a neighbouring settlement near the Mkulamazi River in south-west Njelu and noted that their produce was “principally mslanga” (probably finger millet) for local beer production “a great deal of which is consumed at Sonjela’s” (Redmond 1985:86). It appears that local leaders appointed and trained to oversee these settlements soon transformed into arrogant agents of the Ngoni State: “In such cases one sees a stout, well-to-do man, evidently living on the fat of the land, dressed like a Magwangwara, who struts about and gives himself airs, but he is usually a Ndonde, or one of some other subject tribe who has been trained by them” (Smythies 1887, quoted in Redmond 1985:84). A decade later, Prince remarked disparagingly about this kind of imitation among *sutu* social climbers, which he regarded as akin to “putting a lion’s skin on a hyena”, a phrase which also reveals his respect for the Ngoni leadership (Prince 1894:220). We are left with an impression that satellite villages such as these were poorly integrated, and subject to heavy-handed or brutal intervention. Those aspiring leaders and others willing to assimilate were inferior imitators of ‘true’ Ngoni values and ways. Their relatively recent origin suggests an inferior status and degree of integration compared with the Ndendeuli. However the youth were emerging as a progressive force in the new order.

After visiting Njelu, Johnson passed through the Litembo Mountains where the Matengo, ruled by Amakita, lived in caves and stockaded huts apparently in fear of Ngoni raids. Johnson was the first of many Europeans to praise their agricultural system, which had been intensified as a response to their insecure and cramped environment (Johnson 1884:517). Johnson saw Amakita as in tributary status like the groups he had just encountered in southern Njelu, although presumably on a larger scale. However, he notes, “Many of these hill-people have adopted the Angone shield” (Johnson 1884:515). Oral histories collected by Ebner in the 1950s claim that, before the Maseko Ngoni arrived, the population in this area was dispersed among several separate villages, including present-day Litembo and Mapera, but with Ngoni conquest these became impossible to defend. The population therefore concentrated in the Litembo Valley at what became Amakita’s, with some 5000 inhabitants estimated by Fülleborn in 1897.¹⁰ The numerous caves in the Litembo mountains offered excellent refuges during conflict and account for a long history of repeated resistance to Ngoni domination, followed by submission and tribute payment from the time of Maseko’s arrival in 1845.

Claims to authority over the Matengo have been made by descendents of the Makita clan since before the arrival of the Maseko Ngoni in 1845. According to one descendent, Chrysostomus Makita, interviewed in the early 1970s, the first leader from his dynasty formed a military alliance with Maseko, yet Makita willingly joined the rebellion against him during their expulsion in 1862. Makita then established his rule over ‘six countries’ in Umatengo and the Lake Shore area, building several villages, appointing sub-chiefs and imposing internal peace. He secured a military alliance with Nkosi Hawayi of the Njelu Ngoni, and Makita’s soldiers fought alongside Ngoni. Yet Hawayi soon attacked Umatengo and Makita’s people again took refuge in Litembo’s caves. The Ngoni retreated. Later, after the Hehe wars, Matengo warriors captured two Ngoni leaders during a raid on the Lake Shore, and the ransom was resolved with a further period of military alliance with Mharule. Finally in 1885, three years after Johnson noted their tribute-paying status, there was “the last of the spear wars” in which Amakita was killed (Basehart 1972:89-91). Thus, the Ngoni reasserted their dominance until European enforced peace in 1897.

Although this narrative was no doubt constructed in support of historical claims by the Makita clan to the Matengo paramountcy, its general tone rings true. Makita’s hegemony over Umatengo and the Lake Shore would have been one of numerous examples of groups

mimicking Ngoni political organisation, partly in self defence (Basehart 1977:6). It was this political organisation, coupled with the strategic importance of the Litembo physical environment that allowed this “fluid combination of alliance and independence” (Basehart 1977:6). Certainly the Ngoni were obliged to exercise much force to maintain their political control and extract tribute, and possibly slaves. Basehart rightly notes that, “Matengo tradition departs from that of other peoples in the Songea region in its emphasis on periodic resistance to Ngoni attacks” (Basehart 1972:93). Thus Umatengo was able to sustain very different relations with the Ngoni than the Ndendeuli, although both were on opposite sides and roughly equidistant (25 miles due east or west) from the Ngoni centres of power. We must remember that the Ndendeuli were ruled by Ngoni lieutenants based at the Mshope headquarters, while the Makita line of chiefs, although apparently from a Nindi clan which immigrated before the arrival of the Maseko, had greater legitimacy as their leader in the eyes of most Matengo not least because he repeatedly fought alongside his commoner population against the Ngoni. Unlike Makita’s commoners, perhaps Ndendeuli were so fully subordinated that there was never any question of their particular *sutu* status and allegiance.

From the Lake Shore to the Ubena Highlands

Much of Johnson’s writings describe settlements along the eastern shore of Lake Nyasa. South of Chigoma, some 100 miles due south-west of Njelu, he wrote: “Nyassa villages dot the lake shore protected by fences of euphorbia and marshes” (Johnson 1884:514). Near Chigoma itself there were “many villages of independent Nyassa” although Likoma and Chisamulu Islands were “both in dependence on the villages of the Chiteji group” (Johnson 1884:514). The area was thus beyond the frontiers of continuous Ngoni political control, and merely the target for raids. During Johnson’s long stay in Chigoma, Chief Chiteji moved inside a stockade for protection, since “nobody knew when the Gwangwara might not swoop down and burn and butcher” (Johnson 1924:86-7).

It was very soon afterwards that we were waked up in the quite early morning by the long wail of ‘*Koto Koto*’ (danger, danger!) and saw the people living round the bay, who had not yet fled before the expected coming of the Gwangwara, hastening along the shore carrying what they could; we could see also the burning villages in the bight of the bay some five or six miles off; the Gwangwara had come. Chiteji and his nephew agreed to go to parley with the enemy in two big canoes and I went with them. As we landed by the Uchesi River village, we found the body of a man close to the landing,

¹⁰ This figure was comparable with the total population of 6000 Matengo recorded in a German census in 1904 (Ebner 1987:102). Lieder (1897:99, quoted in Redmond 1985:87) estimated 1000 houses.

and not far off another headman who had been speared in the back and whom we tried to sew up, but the poor man died not long afterwards. It seemed that the enemy had moved out of the village when they had spoiled it, so I followed after them to their camp... There did not seem to be a large party of them, I imagine well under a hundred, and when they saw me they came dancing out in a rough semi-circle. ...they gave up dancing and sat down and I sat down too, and then we had a rather lame talk for we had not any serviceable common lingo; but they gave me to understand that they had come across white men in old times and did not want to quarrel with them. They said that there were memories of their having been beaten by the white men in battle and that there were evil people up north whom they called the Nyaka nyaka, who had wantonly burnt the villages in the north of their own country, adding: "Where could we raid now, except in the south?" ... we parted in a friendly spirit and I went back to the village (Johnson 1924:88-89).

This account reveals much about relations by the early 1880s between Ngoni and the poorly defended settlements several days walk from the Ngoni State. Given the rate of expansion of Ungoni, possibly by 1897 such settlements were in formal tribute-paying arrangements, and the frontier, where relations were of this crude and predatory nature, had extended much further. By the mid-1890s the Ngoni were selecting Nyasa men and training them for leadership positions. According to Redmond: "An example was the Nyasa leader, Mpoma. He had been brought to Ungoni when young and there brought up as an Mngoni. He learned to speak fluent Chingoni, to sing Zulu songs and to dress and act like the Ngoni. When he reached adulthood, the Ngoni sent him back to his area, Luhagare, as an Ngoni representative" (Redmond 1985:84).

North of Mbamba Bay, some sixty miles east of central Njelu, Johnson encountered "villages built on piles in the water" where a "brisk traffic goes on" with "Amakita and his dependent villages" who brought Indian corn to exchange for an equal sackful of dried fish (Johnson 1884:515). Indeed economic life with the Indian Ocean coast was thriving and seemingly independent of Ngoni control, since coastal caravans were obliged to establish relations with Nyasa chiefs before crossing the lake. These links allowed villagers opportunities to visit the coast, although "too often some of the little party are killed by marauders, by wild beasts, or hunger" (Johnson 1884:515). Their geography influenced them greatly: "At all points going east from Lake Nyassa... stands a great barrier of hills of considerable variety. To these all the lake people look, whether for the guns that announce a caravan, or for the sweeping raids of an enemy" (Johnson 1884:515). It appears that travel was quite possible for these villagers, although it would have been wise to avoid Ungoni. The Ruvuma appears to have been a border with a safer world. Mpanda's settlement on the Ruvuma was "the edge of the debateable land that caravans only venture to skirt" (Johnson 1884:534) despite being thirteen days walk from Njelu. Meanwhile, to the north of Mbamba

Bay, again, people lived in fear, and were forced to live on immense, intricate structures in the water itself: "Some of these lake-dwellings, especially one at Hinga, were of large size, with platforms probably four to five hundred feet long and possibly thirty broad. Some were two stories high; a lower story for cattle and goats, while the men lived above" (Johnson 1924:105). Life in these pile-houses was hard, and many years later Johnson was told by one former resident:

In the old days... you might have plenty of fish at times, but you could go nowhere to beg or buy any grain. Perhaps at intervals some of the people on the lower hills would come down with a little grain to exchange for fish when they longed for it as a relish; at other times there was no corn to be had. The dwellers on the piles had a few patches of corn here and there, where they could venture to plant it among the reeds on the mainland, but they sorely needed some Gideon, bold enough to thrash the corn when the enemy was about (Johnson 1924:105).

This is most revealing about conditions for the Nyasa inhabitants pinned against the Lake Shore in fear of Ngoni raids. Like at Chiteji's, their status must have been non-Ngoni who were plundered haphazardly, unlike the satellite villages Johnson encountered one day's walk from Njelu. There was also similar refuge to be found on islands along the Ruvuma and Lujenda Rivers (Johnson 1884:520). Further north on the eastern Lake Shore, Johnson recalls how the inhabitants of one settlement "fled helter skelter to hide among the rocks" only returning "when they saw that we were not men with shields" (Johnson 1924:104; cf. 1884:530-1). This reference to "men with shields" again suggests a clear distinction between Ngoni and Non-Ngoni. His earlier reference to many of Amakita's people having "adopted the Angone shield" reflects the same choice. By this time, the Lake Shore populations had not succumbed, yet Amakita's seemingly had.

Johnson encountered much confusion over who was raiding whom, and who was the 'chief', which forces us to acknowledge that distance from the centre was just one among many factors in a complex political landscape. Johnson's journey from the north end of the Lake into the Ubena Highlands aimed to seek out the "Nyaka Nyaka" (i.e. the Hehe, based in Iringa) and somehow pacify them because, "to really master the situation in this region it seemed to me necessary to visit those who raid these raiders" (Johnson 1884:524). After trekking for several days, passing many villages burnt by the Gwangwara nobody could advise him where they lived or who their chief was, or indeed what they were called. At first they were 'Wabena' and later 'Wa-jinga', while local people "represented themselves as attacked on all sides" in particular by Merere of Usangu to the north (Johnson 1884:529). Eventually, writes Johnson, "we reached a place said by the frightened guides to be the real

Wa-jinga's abode". On finding a chief, "He said first that he was the head chief; then that the chief lived two months off, and so on" (Johnson 1884:528). The mission was soon aborted when locals refused to let them proceed (Johnson 1924:103). The different names of ethnic groups are an indication of the impossibility of a synoptic view of the Ngoni State at this time before colonial rule imposed its simplifications. On this journey, the Ngoni were at different times the Gwangwara, Wa-poma, or Wayoya, and elsewhere many names were in use. Yet another form of identification which, like the Angoni shield, appears to have been less ambiguous, was the slit earlobe. Johnson wrote: "Here, as before they asked me if my men were not from the Gwangwara... Their having slit ears was indeed a sign that they had been at one time with the Angone west of Nyassa" (Johnson 1884:528). In fact they were assumed to be Ngoni spies (Johnson 1924:102).

From Northern Mozambique to Masasi

By the time of Johnson's travels in north-west Mozambique, the Yao were divided between a number of chiefs living on hilltops throughout the region to the west of the Lujenda, south of the Ruvuma and east of Lake Nyasa. "The great chiefs of the country are Chitesi and Makanjila on the lake; Mponda, on the Shire; and Mataka, near the Lujende. Each of these commands 6000 men. Next to them rank Mtarika and Kandulu on the Lujende, the chiefs of Chiwagulu and Unyango to the west of Luchulingo, and Masenje on the lake, with 4000 men each" (Johnson 1882:484). Despite their size, fortification and distance from Njelu (150 miles south), these too were periodically subjected to raiding. On the Mwembe plateau, Johnson wrote, "the successive raids have not been able to drive the inhabitants entirely from the country. For as the marshes of the lake afford shelter, so do the hills; thus Nyambi's people have been driven to the hills near Mangoche, the Mtonia mass is occupied – villages cluster round Lisali, and the hills east of Mataka's town" (Johnson 1884:519). For Johnson perhaps the most striking of these hill-towns was Unyango with at least 9000 huts covering the hillsides below, "the two peaks of Unyango rising sheer out of a flat plain before us". The same was found at Chiwagula, another Amakali Yao settlement (Johnson 1884:519). The area was raided by Ngoni, and their imitators the Alolo. Not only were the Ngoni successfully able to raid huge fortified hill-settlements, but also to resettle captives in the Msinje valley, and retain political control over them.

Far worse than the Alolo have been the Gwangwara, who have carried their merciless forays through the land. Just before I passed through the country they had swept round Unyango hill. Mtonia had seen them in the distance. They had left many dead of small-pox at Mkata's; but as we look at the

Msinje valley we find them settling refugees from Unyango, Chiwagula, and other places as dependents of their own. [...] The people who submit to the Gwangwara are not to be envied (Johnson 1884:520).

These Yao hill-towns appear to have had a changing history of resistance and subordination resembling Amakita's fortified community. In 1888, Machemba managed to defeat an Ngoni raid and retain independence, while, by the mid 1890s, Matola had submitted and agreed to pay tribute in goats, cloth and other goods (Redmond 1985:86).

By the 1880s the frontier of Njelu raiding had reached the Indian Ocean and tribute arrangements were being established with existing polities, including even the UMCA mission station and settlement of freed slaves at Masasi, 225 miles east of Songea. A spectacular raid in 1882 resulted in the capture by Nduna Songea's followers of 23 mission staff for ransom (Redmond 1985:65). The Reverend Porter travelled to Songea to negotiate their release, and a 'treaty of friendship' was secured on condition that the mission paid Songea an annual tribute (Redmond 1985:65). According to Redmond, "By the mid-1880s, the entire region between Masasi and Ungoni lay barren and largely empty" (Redmond 1985:66). Some groups hid but risked attack. The Ngindo apparently resisted the pressure to reside in compact fortified settlements who "regarded them as incompatible with a freeman's dignity and despised those who thus compromised their independence" despite repeated raids from their Ndendeuli neighbours (Iliffe 1979:75). Among these less fortified, acephalous populations of south-east Tanzania, perhaps the commonest form of encounter with the Ngoni was exemplified by a raid in the 1890s on Ruponda village near Lukeledi. One captive, who endured the one-month journey back to Njelu at the age of ten, recalled in the 1950s how his "village chief", Majanjila, had submitted to the Ngoni but was allowed to remain in the country. In return, "he had to supply them with food and to help them with their raids whenever they came into his region; he himself and his people who remained with him were from that time on considered as subjects of the Wangoni" (Ebner 1987:116). Again, the seemingly unambiguous status of 'subject' – or *sutu* – was imposed, yet the label hides as much as it reveals.

The Geography of Ngoni-Sutu Relations

This brief overview of Ngoni encounters with their neighbours, in particular around the 1880s at the time of the Ndendeuli movement eastwards from direct Mshope control, highlights the difficulty with both models of the geography of the state proposed above. The numerous Ndendeuli settlements were clearly very much part of Mshope. Those scattered Donde, Nindi and Yao villages established by "miniature Babylonian conquerors" in southern Njelu and the

Upper Msinje River might be regarded simplistically to have been one generation behind. Tributary settlements being established in Masasi, such as Ruponda, bore similarities to these yet their distant location prevented the kind of continuous interaction, and thus cultural assimilation, possible in Ndendeuli and Njelu. So far, the geography of the pre-colonial Ngoni State resembles Iliffe's "webs of relationships which grew steadily weaker with distance from the capital until they merged into the statelessness of peripheral peoples" (Iliffe 1979:25). But once we leave the gently undulating plains that stretch eastwards from Ungoni to the Indian Ocean the surrounding mountainous terrain to the north, south and west, afforded opportunities for the construction of compact, fortified hill-towns ruled as hierarchical polities. One outcome was the long history of resistance, submission and alliance in Umatengo and similar hill-towns in northern Mozambique. These observations break down the symmetry of the 'Iliffe model'. Assimilation of Ngoni culture and identity took on unique forms in these hill-towns differing greatly with settlements in Ndendeuli and Njelu. Yet in all these examples it is important to remember the multiple roles and meanings of *sutu* and the need to express multiple identities in numerous contexts. In Iliffe's words: "Even in the most sophisticated polities descent remained the core of a man's identity. [...] Men still had many loyalties: to nuclear family, extended family, descent group, clan, village, patron, chiefdom, perhaps even tribe. One was relevant in one situation, another in another" (Iliffe 1979:25). Ngoni identity and the identities of individual *sutu* were rarely if ever mutually exclusive, most notably perhaps with Amakita's adherents who 'carried the shield'.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined historical events surrounding the Ngoni conquest in 1845 and subsequent development of two powerful autonomous states, Njelu and Mshope, in present-day Songea. The prevailing understanding of a peaceful, stable, egalitarian society in pre-conquest Songea has been critiqued in the light of more recent scholarship, yet this view remains largely intact. The irregular nature of Ndendeuli ethnogenesis and the politically-laden and contested meanings of the Ndendeuli name provides a powerful instance of creative interpretations of the past to support ongoing political struggles. Rather than viewing this process as cynical 'invention of tradition', the politics of representation makes more sense as an outcome of genuine efforts to understand the past within the conceptual constraints of a tribal model of ethnicity that has persisted in popular consciousness since Indirect Rule.

By analysing the factors leading to the opposed political evolution of Njelu and Mshope, the considerable impact this had on settlement patterns, political control and ethnic

identities is obvious, with the emergence of a geographically separate Ndendeuli population on the eastern frontier of Mshope. This is the foundation for my argument, developed in subsequent chapters, that divergence in the historical paths of Undendeuli and central Ungoni can be regarded as a consequence of the former being effectively the frontier of the latter. With this thesis in mind, two models of the geography of the Ngoni State were proposed. But on reviewing literature on the social and spatial organisation in the centre as opposed to various parts of the periphery, we conclude that neither model is entirely satisfactory, simply because of variations in topography. The physical and political environments were intertwined in ways that were impossible under colonial rule with its imposed peace, and homogenising administration. Nevertheless, for the populations of Yao, Nindi, Donde, Ngindo, and indeed Ndendeuli, inhabiting the vast wooded plains of southern Tanzania, there was arguably a meaningful relationship between the character of assimilation and distance from the centre of Ngoni power.

Colonial Administration and the Politics of Representation, 1897-1961

For the first European visitors to Songea, the Ngoni were a proud nation of disciplined and fearless warriors, with values and institutions to match. Their authoritarian, hierarchical social organisation was reflected in their structured settlement pattern and impressive agricultural performance. The remarks of Prince, quoted in the previous chapter, denigrating inferior imitators of the Ngoni elite indicate the favourable impression this fine body of people had on his military mind. Early missionary writings reveal how the Ngoni State fitted prevailing romantic visions of African kingdoms. Within contemporary *Volksmission* theory, Ngoni society offered the enviable chance to convert an entire kingdom as a complete system, rejecting barbaric elements in favour of civilisation, but retaining its positive institutions and values – its discipline, strength and order.¹¹

However, over the coming 50 years this overwhelmingly positive (and highly gendered) impression by resident Europeans gradually deteriorated, to be replaced by a diametrically-opposed characterisation of Ngoni as lazy, undisciplined, backward and conservative. By 1959 Njelu had been “the despair of successive generations of Administrators since the beginning of the British Mandate” (Wise 1959:9). Gulliver summarised the general feeling in 1954:

As late as the early 1930s the Ngoni were regarded by Europeans on the spot, as a fine body of people with a sense of grandeur, a willingness to work, a notable tribal discipline and an attractive character: in the early 1950s they are becoming known as lazy, unambitious, indifferent to self improvement and rather unamenable to change, and they have lost their old discipline and strength of character. This is the general analysis of several Europeans who have known the Ngoni over a long period, and it can be supplemented by a

¹¹ Based upon the *Volksmission* theory of the German theologian, Gustav Warneck, African societies were seen as stable, homogenous entities that could be converted as organic units from the top down. For the Benedictines in Ungoni, “the Abbot of St Ottilien ordered his monks to lead *peoples* to Christ, not merely particular classes” (Iliffe 1979:218). After winning over the ruling elite, the rest of the population would follow their example (Doerr 1998:17).

comparison of earlier accounts with present conditions. Unfortunately the old popular notion of the Ngoni is no longer true (Gulliver 1954:114).

The “general stagnation” was apparent in every aspect of Ngoni life: “Whether one surveys their agriculture, their housing, their diet, their standards of life or their ceremonial, one finds only a depressing poverty of ideas and ambition and an equally depressing resignation to its perpetuation” (Gulliver 1954:116). The negative impression of the Ngoni was enhanced by the remarkable contrast with some of their immediate neighbours – those former tribute-paying groups, the Ndendeuli and Matengo, and even the isolated Bena to the north. Gulliver was the most prolific writer on this extraordinary degeneration in Ngoni character, and his work presents a coherent and comprehensive analysis of its historical and sociological causes which reveals much about late-colonial constructions of African society.

This chapter begins with a brief political history of Ngoni society under colonial rule. I then present archival material to show the changing official representations of Ngoni society and their respective Native Authorities, and likewise for neighbouring ethnic groups – Ndendeuli, Matengo, Nyasa, Bena, and Yao. I cover the period of reversal in representations highlighted by Gulliver from 1920 to 1960, focusing on the reports and diaries of agricultural officers whose judgements proved to be so influential. Perhaps the greatest expression of both causes and consequences of Ngoni ‘backwardness’ in the eyes of colonial administrators was what Gulliver called the ‘boundary problem’. This is discussed alongside the analyses of Ngoni character presented by Gulliver, and another late-colonial sociologist, Wise, in an effort to understand contemporary constructions of African society in general and the willingness of different ethnic groups in Songea to embrace development.

Colonial Administration, 1897-1945

German Rule and the Maji Maji Rebellion, 1897-1916

Njelu was occupied by German forces in July 1897, ten years after their establishment in Dar es Salaam (Iliffe 1979:88ff). With the passive acceptance of Njelu leaders, a boma was erected near Nduna Songea’s residence, while Mshope submitted the following year (Redmond 1985:98-100). Taxation was introduced in 1899, raiding was banned, and district boundaries were established which freed former subject groups from economic and political subordination. Thus, Songea District was created to contain the two Ngoni Chiefdoms – Mshope and Njelu – the Ndendeuli to the east, Matengo to the west, with small populations of

Bena to the north and Yao to the south (Redmond 1985:101). Under German direct rule, the Njelu Nduna Songea was selected to become the official representative to the German District Officer, although he was not the most senior member of the Njelu ruling families. Songea was not, however, a paramount chief, and administration was through several sultans and akidas of equal subordinate status, selected locally from among former ndunas and nkosis.

Importantly, as with other 'stateless' societies, the Germans failed to recognise Mshope authority over the Ndendeuli, and an alien Akida was appointed over them at Likuyu, a position that was retained until 1930. This decision allowed the Ndendeuli to sustain and build a separate political culture, organisation and identity. However traditional bonds endured for many years, in ambivalent ways. One tradition from an Ndendeuli informant recalled in 1969 that, "We the Wahamba somehow appreciated a number of the German rules because they directly opposed the Ngoni rules, especially of using us as unpaid servants" (Redmond 1985:116). This tradition must be seen within the context of contemporary ethnic discord rather than a direct reading of the past. At the time, it was also stated that the Nyasa were grateful with German occupation (Redmond 1985:117) and the accounts of their living conditions given in Chapter Two would appear to support this claim. Yet, in 1931 the influence of former Ngoni rule was still surprisingly strong with headmen apparently walking from Lituhi on the Lake Shore to Ndirima, the capital of Njelu "to ask Zulu to settle a quarrel" (TNA/SDB, General History, 6F).

The outward acceptance of German rule was about to give way to the greatest act of resistance to colonial conquest in East African history – the Maji Maji rebellion. The motives, events and organisation behind the rebellion are well documented and analysed, and will not be elaborated here.¹² Originating in the south-east of the territory in mid-1905, the movement was linked to the spread of a religious cult by prophets who believed that contact with a certain water – the *maji* of the movement's name – could protect warriors from the effects of German bullets. Njelu and Mshope populations participated fully in the rising, and suffered the consequences when it was mercilessly suppressed. Neighbouring groups, however, were understandably unwilling to participate, partly fearing a revival of Ngoni militarism, and Nyasa and Yao groups offered to support the Germans (Redmond 1985:123; Iliffe 1979:188).

German reinforcements arrived in Songea on 29 November 1905, and the rebellion was systematically suppressed by seizing food reserves and destroying crops and villages throughout Ungoni. Along with Nkosi Mputa of Njelu, nearly a hundred Ngoni elite were hanged in 1906, including Nduna Songea, while others were deported to the coast as forced labour (Iliffe 1979:197-200). The consequences of the rising and subsequent suppression

were severe. The population of Ungoni is estimated to have halved due to death or out-migration, from perhaps 60,000 to 30,000 (Redmond 1985:136).¹³ The immediate chaos and devastation was soon over, and people began moving back from late 1907. However, more fundamental consequences to the administrative order lingered for decades.¹⁴ These were embodied in the boundary problem, and the related diagnosis of colonial officials that the structures and traditions of Ngoni society were fundamentally and perhaps irreparably shattered. Henceforth, Ngoni society was a 'system in collapse'. The basic administrative structure was retained and a new, compliant leadership was appointed from the remnants of the Ngoni ruling families (Redmond 1985:138).

British Rule, 1916-1945

The First World War in Ungoni came to a head on 19 September 1916 when a British force took Songea boma following only minor resistance (Redmond 1985:146). Within Songea the new British administration inherited five sub-divisions: Njelu, Mshope, Ubena, Matengo and the Lake Shore. Efforts began to rationalise the unequal distribution of population between various sultans and akidas, and reduce their number to 12 in Njelu and four in Mshope. Numerous jumbeates were also amalgamated. During these negotiations, Chabruma's half brother, Palangu, managed to convince the British that he was the legitimate ruler of Mbunga Ndunate in eastern Mshope, which led to bitter protests in 1919 from the Ndendeuli population, many of whom emigrated to Mahenge District rather than be ruled by an Ngoni. The Yao community at Kikole also protested unsuccessfully against Ngoni control, and, among other grievances, "considered themselves free from the Angoni tribal service of one day's cultivation for the Sultan". Their compliance only came after burning their new Jumbe's hut (Redmond 1985:147-154).

Indirect Rule was introduced throughout Tanganyika in 1926, and with it an effort to revive the structure of pre-colonial African society before it had, in the British official imagination, been so violently destroyed by the Germans. In Songea District, there were two glaring inconsistencies between the ideal model of pre-colonial tribal organisation and the local social and historical reality. These were the demographic instability evident in its

¹² See Iliffe (1967; 1979 Chapter 6), Mapunda and Mpangala (1969), Gwassa (1973), Gwassa and Iliffe (1968), Ebner (1987:135ff); Redmond (1985 Chapter 5).

¹³ Total deaths in the Maji Maji are estimated by historians to be 250,000 to 300,000, or perhaps one-third of the total population of the affected region throughout southern Tanzania (Gwassa 1973:389).

¹⁴ At the national level, disillusionment following the rebellion drove the Governor to abandon the whole of southern German East Africa to economic stagnation, including the rejection of plans to construct a railway to the Lake Shore from the Indian Ocean coast in preference for areas which might respond more positively to investment (Redmond 1985:139).

turbulent history, and the presence of acephalous, or stateless populations such as the Ndendeuli on the peripheries of the Ngoni State. In 1922, the District Officer, West, highlighted the complexity of Ngoni ethnicity in his Annual Report, by pointing out that, “their people were composed of representatives of every tribe through whom they had passed” (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922). Similarly, in the following year he wrote:

An examination into the tribes of persons before the Courts shews that representatives of 48 different tribes were convicted of offences. This is probably about half the number of the tribes of which there are members in the District. A comparative statement of tribes would only be misleading to anyone unacquainted with the tribal position in the District and it is not inserted. Suffice it to say that the tribe “WANGONI” does not appear because it is not a tribal name, and that about half of the tribes before the court would, if dealing with strangers, refer to themselves as Wangoni (TNA1733/15, SDAR 1923, page 29).

West’s successor, Longland, was posted to Songea in April 1924 and remained until July 1926. He, then, was the officer responsible for implementing Indirect Rule in Songea. Longland’s Annual Report in 1924 includes a map showing locations of the 27 sultans and akidas, and the names of officially recognised local tribes. No boundaries are indicated, reflecting the fact that bonds of allegiance were highly dispersed and not territorially defined as a result of demographic disruptions during Maji Maji and the First World War. The Ndendeuli, Pangwa, Bena and Yao are clearly marked as important ethnic entities, as well as Matumbi and Kissi (who were effectively erased from the official tribal inventory during Indirect Rule) while the Nyanja or Nyasa were not yet formally recognised. Ngoni was not yet divided into Njelu and Mshope reflecting official failure to recognise their political integrity and the traditional position of nkosi as superior to sultan. Longland was already aware that a version of Indirect Rule would soon be introduced, prompting him to write of the Ngoni: “Efforts are being made to preserve this polity, which is organised on a pure native basis, and to build up by its aid a native administration worthy of the name (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 3). Arguably, then, Longland’s map was already part of a process of simplification and homogenisation of local ethnicities. In 1925 he wrote: “A large portion of the district easily and naturally falls back into the state in which it was some 70 years ago” (quoted in Gallagher 1971:306). This quote rests uneasily alongside West’s more nuanced, if unworkable, understanding of ethnicity conceived before Indirect Rule.

The search to ‘find the chief’ in Songea District produced four groups – Njelu, Mshope, Ukena and Upangwa. The traditional titles – nkosi and nduna – were reintroduced. In Njelu, Usangila Zulu Gama was selected to become nkosi, while Dominikus Mbonani Tawete was brought back from employment as a clerk at a coastal plantation and installed as

Nkosi of Mshope. These two contrasting characters were to rule for most of the British period (see Appendix 2). Beneath Usangila were nine ndunates, while in Mshope there were three: Gumbiro, overseen by the Nkosi himself; Mbunga, overseen by Palangu; and Likuyu where Rashid, the German-appointed Akida, still presided over the eastern Ndendeuli populations who thus retained their political autonomy (Gulliver 1954:23). The crucial decision to retain Rashid was accounted for by the DC, Baxter, in 1931:

In the formation of group 2 [i.e. Mbonani], however, it was found advisable to make a new or extraordinary election to give full effect to the plan of centralisation. This was in respect of the Wandendehule who had never in their history combined under a paramount. Akin to the Wambunga and Wamakonde, this tribe seems never to have known a larger unit than the 'family'. Aboriginal to Songea they were, owing to lack of cohesion, easily overcome by the invading Wangoni who, in derision, termed them Wandendehule (which, interpreted, means 'what shall I do?'). Under their numerous village leaders, they had settled down comfortably in dependence upon the Wangoni. With the introduction of the group system, their numerous petty headmen could not all be recognized as co-equal; they were called upon to elect a Senior representative. In 1926 Rashid of Likuyu was elected by them as their Nduna under Mbonani (TNA/SDB, Native Administration, 22/7/31).

Thus a compliant Ndendeuli, "comfortably" subordinate to their Ngoni masters, was invented to smooth over their anomalous status as a stateless society. However, jumbes continued to be selected from within respective communities rather than appointed from outside. As a result, in Likuyu Ndunate, where the majority of present-day Ndendeuli live, nine out of eleven jumbes were Ndendeuli. By contrast, in Ndirima, the headquarters of Nkosi Usangila of Njelu, five out of six were Swazi (Redmond 1985:159). These fundamental differences in origin and identity of local government agents helped to sustain and reinforce emerging differences in culture, identity and society in eastern Mshope and both Ngoni centres. However, within the principles of Indirect Rule, Rashid's position was an anomaly, and under threat. Although the Mshope royal family had protested against Rashid's retention in Likuyu, he was favourable to the local administration, until 1929 when he was implicated by the Mshope elite in a witchcraft eradication movement along with charges of corruption, leading to his replacement by one of Nkosi Mbonani's cousins, Sekamaganga. This successful effort to consolidate Ngoni power over Likuyu brought the Ndendeuli under direct Ngoni control for the first time since German conquest (Redmond 1985:160) and initiated a secession movement that lasted for the next 25 years.

Representations of Tribes and Chiefs, 1920-1949

The Evolutionary Scale of Tribes

In the first years of the British administration, the mature ethnic stereotyping typical of the 1950s was relatively undeveloped. With hindsight, official impressions made during the 1920s appear haphazard, as if formed from the briefest of encounters, or perhaps mediated by missionaries, chiefs and clerks. The ease with which such strong opinions were committed to paper suggests a detachment from local affairs, as well as a disposition to the idea that the natives consisted of discrete groups, each with its discrete characteristics that were easily discerned. From the start, we see how performance in agriculture and to a lesser extent willingness to migrate for paid labour (in other words, contribution to the emerging colonial economy) were fundamental criteria for judgement. One consequence of these criteria was that representations were gendered in significant and multiple ways, since male labour migration left behind women to do the agricultural work.¹⁵ By the first years of British rule, a number of enduring ethnic stereotypes had already emerged, most noticeably a continuation of European respect for Matengo agriculture tempered by their reputation for being suspicious and cunning. In 1920, the Political Officer, Captain MacAllan, wrote, “Wamatengo (Lipumba) are very distrustful... good cultivators but at present useless for any other purpose. Living as they did in the midst of war-like tribes they have got to regard their mountain fastness and caves as their chief friends and allies and cannot be persuaded to leave them” (TNA/1733/1, SDAR 1919/20, pages 23-4). Similarly, the reputations of the Nyasa and Yao as bad farmers had already become established. Meanwhile, regarding the Ndendeuli (“aspirate at pleasure”): “Their language is very similar to that of their Eastern neighbours the Wangindo and like them, they are characterised by a certain slimness, obstinacy and temperament which at times borders on truculence” (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922). By this stage the Ngoni reputation remained unscathed, although the earlier praise for their agriculture was now conspicuous by its absence.

In 1923, as part of an ongoing effort by the British to explore and describe their new dependency, West attempted to classify local tribes on an evolutionary scale:

The district Tribes vary in their predilections and eagerness for work. It is noteworthy that the desire for labour increases in direct ratio to the progress from a matriarchal to a partiarchal [sic] system of personal law. From the

¹⁵ Moore and Vaughan (1994) examine the changing nature of gender relations and identities among rural Bemba farmers and labour migrants in north-west Zambia for whom gender was an explicit part of colonial representations.

Wayao, with their almost pure mother-right and their marriage of “KULOMBA” which is entirely independent of wealth, through the Wandendehule, in a half way position with their marriage of “KUTAMA PA CHENGO” and the Wabena just emerged from matriarchy, up to the Wanyasa, Wamatengo, Wapangwa and Wangoni who all submit to the patria postestas and “LOBOLA” their women and must have property for the purpose, an ascending scale of desire for the acquisition of wealth by effort is clearly discerned. [...] The degree to which the acquisition of wives and the prolongation of life through the children is not dependent upon riches is the measure of the degree to which the acquisition of wealth by manual labour is left in abeyance (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923, pages 18-19).

West’s theory was paraphrased by Longland the following year, in a fine example of ‘received wisdom’ (TNA/155/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, pages 10-11). There is a satisfying internal logic to this argument, but its reliance on rigid, timeless, traditional social institutions which are held in common by members of a discrete homogenous tribe, and which determine its propensity to work, and indeed to embrace modernity itself, appears in hindsight to be wildly misconceived. Not least, it denies Africans’ agency; their ability to respond to opportunities or initiate change without enlightened European intervention. Thus, the Ngoni were at the top of the evolutionary ladder with their patriarchy, bridewealth, and their hierarchical Conquest State soon to be revived under Indirect Rule. Since Songea boma was near central Njelu, with 11 sultans resident within a radius of 30 miles mainly of Swazi or true Ngoni origin (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 3), it is hard to imagine that European ethnic stereotypes also did not reflect the opinions of the Ngoni elite, at least in the first years of British rule. The Ndendeuli “truculence” clearly reflected the Ngoni attitude of derision towards their former serfs. Similarly, descriptions of Matengo witchcraft practices may have originated from German missionaries residing at Kigonsera (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922). Concerning the Ngoni themselves, judgements continued to be few, although in 1926 we hear from Longland that the Ngoni, “is an excellent labourer and is much sought after by Recruiting Agents. He is abnormally fond of ‘pombe’, and beer drinks are frequent” (TNA/SDB ‘A’). Such comments are hard to separate from general judgements about all Africans in Songea, which help put ethnic stereotypes in context. Thus, elsewhere Longland wrote, “the native for the most part, are workers. They are, however, thriftless, and improvident. They are fairly law abiding. Superstition and drunkenness are their greatest curses” (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 24).

During the early 1920s official attitudes towards the Native Authorities were positive and optimistic. In 1923, West noted “great improvements” and “a much better understanding of their rights and duties”. They were “beginning to rule their people with methods more in accord with justice and morality” (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923:58). In 1924, Longland lamented their loss of respect from their subjects and wrote of their need to engineer it for themselves: “Inter alia, they are encouraged to build themselves larger houses, and to plant a flag staff before it. Stencilled boards with the name of the chief upon it, are provided to all who ask for it. Lime for washing the house can also be obtained” (TNA/SDAR 1924, page 3). Soon, the search for hereditary chiefs for Indirect Rule was accompanied in official correspondence by comprehensive descriptions of their characters to determine their suitability and legitimacy.

We saw in the previous chapter how structural differences between Njelu and Mshope had already been present within the two groups before they settled in Songea around 1862. For the next four decades, the Mshope nkosis had followed a pattern of autocratic, and at times even despotic, centralised rule, while each Njelu nkosi had been forced to share a large degree of power with up to ten ndunas many of whom had been direct or indirect threats to his position. The extent to which these structural features may have conditioned the character of successive nkosis is hard to judge. Yet even after German conquest there is a curious continuity between the contrasting character of nkosis in Njelu and Mshope right into the early 1950s. In 1921, Nkosi Usangila of Njelu was seen by European officials as “a man of somewhat weak character and rather intemperate” with “an undue liking for native beer” although he appeared to be “well disposed to the British Government. Meanwhile, Likotiko, the nkosi of Mshope until 1925, appeared to have adopted the strong autocratic rule of Chipeta and Chabruma. He was “a man of considerable character, and, owing to his family lineage, is paid much respect” (TNA/2590, DPO to CS, 24/1/21). In February 1926, while discussing Usangila’s legitimacy for Indirect Rule, the continued structural power of his ndunas is described:

There is no doubt he is the father of the Zulu group. All look up to him and like him. He is somewhat addicted to pombe. He appears to like to be left alone and I don’t think cares for responsibility or publicity. At his baraza he is likely to be overruled by some of the “hot heads” among the manduna unless the boma seizes every opportunity of publicly exhibiting the fact that he and he only is the man whom authority is invested. Backed thus and with the regard the “Wazulu” have for him he should be a most successful unit in the new system of native administration (TNA/SDB ‘A’, c.23/2/26).

The author, probably Longland, continued, revealing the optimism of the period, and a belief that Usangila's shortcomings were most likely the Germans' fault and would surely be rectified once he, and others like him, were returned to their rightful positions in the reconstituted pre-colonial Ngoni State. Regarding other sultans and jumbes in Njelu, the same document, handwritten in 1926, gives a colourful collection of judgements. We hear that, "Sultan Bwana Ali appears to be an amiable old man, well liked by his people but exercising no authority". Sultan Halifa was "intelligent and progressive". Sultan Bwana Issa was "a useless bedridden old man with no authority". Nduna Ali Songea was "a most efficient ruler" but "reputed to be anti-European and... entertains undesirable guests". Nduna Fuse was "very astute" but "suffers from self importance and arrogance" and was "too big for his boots". Nduna Zamtanga was "intelligent, hardworking, law abiding". Nduna Kapungu was "a good natured buffoon" who "will never 'set the shambas on fire'". Nduna Mperembe was "intelligent and helpful". Finally, Nduna Mgendera was "a young man with no salient characteristics" (TNA/SDB 'A'). Above all, this inventory reveals a full range of abilities and qualities among the Native Authorities to be selected for Indirect Rule in the eyes of administrators. Significantly, however, no overriding negative stereotype of the Ngoni had yet emerged.

Responses to Early Agricultural Development

In 1928 the first Agricultural Officer, Stenhouse, was posted to Songea, and ethnic stereotyping increasingly reflected perceived differences in ability and willingness of tribes to embrace modern agriculture. An economic survey of the District confidently asserted that, "The Ungoni people (including the mixture of tribes subdued by the Wangoni) and the Matengo people are among the best native farmers in Africa" (TNA/SDB, Ungoni Matengo Basic Economic Survey, 1928). However, in the same year, a visiting agriculturalist, C.K. Latham, wrote a piece on Matengo agriculture, and revealingly chose to misquote the survey by omitting the Ngoni (TNA/SDB, Stock and Agriculture). Perhaps the survey had got it wrong and was relying on outdated information from the early missionaries and travellers. Either way, Ngoni agriculture was never again positively described.

Stenhouse introduced the fire-cured tobacco industry to Songea District, and already by 1931 differences were emerging in the willingness of Native Authorities and their subjects to support the establishment of trial plots and encourage production. Thus, in this year we have the beginnings of the enduring representation of Ngoni as inferior agriculturalists, along with the Nyasa on the Lake Shore, while in European estimations the Matengo forged ahead:

That the people of the Songea District particularly the Wamatengo, are beginning to appreciate and realise the value of the work being done on their behalf is evident, as shown in their requests for improved seeds and increased interest in their Sub Station. There is however a great deal of room for improvement, mainly on the part of the Zulu Wangoni and WaNyasa people, who of all concerned have shown the greatest lack of interest and enterprise (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1930/31, page 10).

The Nyasa had already been described as “the worst agriculturalists” in 1922. By 1929, the view that they lacked initiative was supported by their apparent inability to sell their fish: “The conservative, and improvident people of this area might have found a market inland for such a product as dried fish, but no attempt has so far been made to find this market. Any buying, and selling that goes on is purely casual” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1929, page 5). In 1930, we hear that “the people generally, continue to be indifferent to Agricultural work carried out for their benefit”. However, it was acknowledged that this was “partly due to the large numbers of cattle possessed, and if sufficient grazing is to be left for them, there is little suitable ground left for cultivation” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR, 1929/30, page 5). Herein lies one of numerous examples in the archives where a negative representation is accompanied by a perfectly sound explanation that, from a present-day perspective, should have excused them from blame. Yet the notion that a tribe could be inherently bad at agriculture remained. Nyasa conservatism was underscored by the judgement throughout the British period that their alien adviser, Wabu, was a highly cooperative and competent leader whom his people failed to follow (TNA/504/18, SDAAR, 1929/30, page 5).

In 1932, the Matengo stereotype was being consolidated around their agricultural performance, suspicious nature, and love of money. One revealing quote begins with the hint of a relationship between ethnic homogeneity and good agriculture, a view that was sustained over coming decades:

... the Wamatengo tribe... are of less mixed lineage, than any of the other tribes of the District. In many respects they are a backward people, through not coming much in contact with other peoples. There are those among them who do not leave their highland fastnesses, and some have been encountered, who even to day, run away at sight of a white man. These latter however, are fast disappearing. Their energy is exemplified in the fact that they cultivate on almost impossible hill slopes, and on shallow boulder strewn soils, where members of any other tribe would not attempt to cultivate. On the whole, these people cannot be regarded as being of a high degree of intelligence, but their agricultural knowledge, and practice is good, and since they appear to be less conservative than their neighbours, they make better material among which to introduce new crops, and industries (TNA/504/6/5, Agricultural Notes of Reference – Songea [ANR], Stenhouse, 8/2/32).

The entire Matengo character was implicitly derived from their historical fear of Ngoni raids that had forced them into compact fortified settlements and caves in the Litembo mountains in pre-colonial times. This accounted for their homogeneity, backwardness, and intensive agriculture. The fact that they had clearly not realised that this threat had been removed 30 years ago, and had projected their irrational fear onto the Europeans instead, proved their suspicious nature and limited intelligence. The quote continues by highlighting their inherent industriousness: “The Wamatengo, being very keen on the possession of ‘Mali’ [wealth] and especially ‘Fetha’ [money] have taken up tobacco and coffee growing with considerable energy, compared with their Ungoni neighbours”. The possibility that differences in soils and climate may have been the overriding factors in determining their readiness to grow coffee does not feature in this narrative. Yet elsewhere the same document notes: “In the Matengo Highland area, there is a greater variety of produce than in any other part of the District. The climate varying as it does, from tropical to almost temperate, makes this variation possible”.

By 1934, the success of Matengo coffee production was creating a growing suspicion for their love of wealth, further strengthened by the perceived character of their chiefs, who were often the primary agents of coffee promotion: “The whole Matengo Native Administration is thoroughly corrupt and supine. [...] All Matengo from Makita downwards are pleasant but where money is concerned both rapacious and cunning” (TNA/155/10/6, Handing Over [H/O] Notes, 15/5/34). We see here an example of an increasing contradiction throughout the British period in Tanganyika, whereby Africans were expected to be progressive but those who did excel in cash crop production and gain personal wealth were often treated with suspicion, as if they were ‘going above their station’. This can be linked to general fears about ‘detribalising’ the native through individualism and capitalism, the risk of collapse of traditional ‘communal’ society, unwillingness to produce food for growing urban markets, and perhaps a dangerous, premature development of political consciousness. Not surprisingly, perhaps, Chrysostomus Makita’s pioneering role in introducing coffee to Umatengo placed him in a more favourable light after independence (Haule 1973). On the whole, however, Matengo responsiveness was gratefully received.

Increasingly throughout the 1930s, willingness to grow, or promote, tobacco became the greatest criterion to judge the differences between tribes and chiefs respectively. However, by the mid-1930s, the pattern which came to dominate the District was still not apparent. Official knowledge by this stage had not associated Njelu with poor tobacco production.

With Usangila's death in 1941, the prospect of obtaining a more dynamic and progressive leader in Njelu did not materialise, with the succession resolving in favour of Korofindo, who was "not a forceful character" and physically weak (TNA/155/SDB, Vol. 5, page 48). Meanwhile, for the population as a whole, agricultural reports focused firmly on tobacco production. The industry was now well established with a cooperative marketing union and 15 primary societies throughout Ungoni and Umatengo. To reflect this tribal composition in 1936 the union had been named Ngoni-Matengo Cooperative Marketing Union, or Ngomat, much to the growing annoyance of the Ndendeuli who were still 15 years away from having their tribe officially recognised. There was an increasing realisation during the 1940s that tobacco was not being taken as seriously in Njelu as elsewhere in the District, and especially in Ndirima, the Njelu Chief's village. By 1940, not only were there more members in the societies in the east of Mshope (i.e. Undendeuli) than in the rest of Mshope, and most of Njelu and Umatengo, but each member was on average producing more tobacco per person (see Chapter Five). Curiously however this geographical difference was not acknowledged in any correspondence until the late 1940s (RH/Mss.Afr.s.1010, Report on the Songea Tobacco Industry, 1940, McGregor).

The state of the Ndirima Primary Society in the 1940s was symbolised by the deteriorating physical state of their marketing shed, internal political difficulties, and the indifference of Nkosi Korofindo who was a local resident. The DC eventually aroused the Nkosi's interest who admitted that the society's problems were deep rooted. But this was "the first time that Nkosi Zulu has shown an interest in the affairs of the Society" (155/coop27/V, Manager Ngomat to DC, 19/1/42). By contrast, in 1941, Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope was described to be taking an "intelligent and active part" in agriculture and tobacco promotion (TNA/504/8/2A, MR March 1941, Stenhouse). During the 1945 rainy season the Ndirima tobacco shed collapsed, a contemporary metaphor perhaps for the state of Njelu society. Since the quantity of tobacco produced was small and of such very poor quality the Manager told the society, "there was no reason why this small quantity of tobacco could not be sold under one of the many shady mango trees" (TNA/144/coop27/VIII, Manager to AO, 6/10/45). Meanwhile, other societies were proudly constructing permanent burnt brick and grass roof markets, and by the end of November 1946 six had done so: Mbinga, Lumecha, Msindo, Matagoro, Liula and Ligera, while Litola and Namtumbo markets were still being erected. All sixteen societies were progressing well, except for three: Gumbiro (headquarters of Mshope) was judged "rather more backward than the other societies"; Mlali (a former pre-colonial trading settlement in Njelu) had insufficient production to warrant a permanent building;

while Ndirima (headquarters of Njelu) was “backward in every respect” (TNA/155/coop27/IX, Manager, Brief Report, 30/11/46).

The first acknowledgement in archival sources that farmers in the east of Mshope (i.e. the Ndendeuli) were producing more tobacco than Njelu came as late as 1948. Clegg noted that, “Increased plantings are reported in Chief Mbonani’s area (Msindo, Litora and Namtumbo especially). Less has been planted this year in Liyangweni and Mgazini areas [in Njelu]. Mpitimbi area [in Njelu] never cultivates tobacco as the native there prefers to plant rice” (TNA/504/8/2A, MR January 1948). However, on this and many other occasions the Ndendeuli were not mentioned. By December 1949 it must have been glaringly obvious that the Ndendeuli were producing more than the Ngoni. A report on the societies noted that “some of the larger ones have now got to the stage where they could well be split up, notably Litola and Namtumbo [in Undendeuli], these two societies produced 1/2 the total 1949 crop” (TNA/155/coop27/X, Brief Report, 1/4-31/12/49). Again the Ndendeuli were not named. Similarly, during the election of the Ngomat Managing Committee in 1949 the affiliated societies were arranged in three sections.¹⁶ By separating Mshope from Ndendeuli, yet uniting Mshope with Njelu, (and separating Matengo from both Ngoni and Ndendeuli) the Cooperative Union implicitly acknowledged political orientations along ethnic lines which were to dominate Union politics for the next 50 years. Yet Ndendeuli (or indeed any other tribe) was not mentioned. The official failure to acknowledge Ndendeuli as a separate category helps explain the absence of judgements on their character until the early 1950s despite their exemplary tobacco production.

However, the fact that Njelu was producing less tobacco than eastern Mshope was unavoidable. In May 1948, Clegg visited both areas in turn. Summarising his trip to eastern Mshope he wrote: “This year a far greater acreage has been planted and in many cases the native has planted more than he can adequately look after. Fields as large as three acres were observed and often a man had more than one field. [...] some individuals are doing very well” (TNA/504/8/2A, SD May 1948). And in Likuyu Fusi, central Njelu: “There is comparatively little tobacco in this area and curing is not as good as that seen east of Songea. The natives here rely on work from Mission etc. rather than on a cash crop. The biggest fields were of Mkubwa wa Chama [Primary Society Chairman] but he was not looking after it as well as he should” (TNA/504/8/2A, SD May 1948). Full acknowledgement of higher tobacco production in the east was still not accompanied by identification of the people responsible.

¹⁶ Section A consisted of Matogoro, Lumetcha, Ndirima, Likuyu-Fusse, Mlali and Gumbiro. Section B was Liula, Ligera, Naindo, Litola, Namtumbo. And Section C was Lipumba, Mbinga, Mbangamawo, Tingi (TNA/155/coop27/X, Minutes of GM of Ngomat, 27-28/5/49).

Representations of Tribes and Chiefs in the 1950s

Changing the Goal Posts

By 1950, official attitudes to the colonial economy had changed. Success in cash crop production by individuals and communities was increasingly regarded with an ambiguous combination of praise and suspicion as we saw for the Matengo in the mid-1930s. Also, attitudes to labour migration had reversed. The praise for the Ngoni for their willingness to work on coastal sisal estates in the 1920s gave way to unanimous disapproval of officials and missionaries alike. As with increased cash crop production, labour migration was seen as a possible source of individualism and 'detrribalisation' as well as a serious drain on local labour. Again the construction of African society as a patchwork of stable, and thus breakable, tribes is revealed in their concerns. In 1950 the District Commissioner's report introduces Gulliver's theme of a people clinging to the past:

Individualism with its lack of respect for any authority grows with the increasing wealth of the people and the very limited intelligence of the Wangoni, in comparison with the other tribes of the district, combined with their innate conservatism and conceit makes them a very difficult tribe to administer. I regard them as a people looking to their past rather than their future and as is usually the case in a people resting on their former glories they are deteriorating as a tribe (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 2).

Anxieties over difficulties in recruiting local labour, despite real increases in basic wages, were increasingly seen as one of the greatest obstacles towards developing the District:

Demands on labour within the District were heavier than ever before and the response most unsatisfactory. With a tradition of leaving the District to work and so much wealth in their hands the local African will not work. At home in his own country the Angoni shows up as quite one of the poorest and most troublesome workers in the territory. All other tribes including the Nyasa have a far higher output. [...] I know of no clear-cut reason why the labour from this district should seek work so far afield. I believe that there are three main reasons:- (1) Conservatism. At one time necessary to go far afield and it takes time to break long accustomed [sic] habits. (2) A natural love of wandering. (3) A search for higher wages (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 9).

Thus the explanation linked inherent conservatism with inherent wanderlust (evidenced by their South African origins), while the obvious economic incentive for migration was

subordinated. Again, this must be seen as a consequence of a tribal model of society that distorted the range of explanations in favour of enduring tribal traditions.

The contrasting representations of Njelu and Mshope nkosis continued, despite changes in their identity. Nkosi Korofindo of Njelu died in 1949 and was succeeded by Xaver the following year. In 1950 we hear that: "Xavier is a young man with a not unblemished record and of apparently weak character and he will need much assistance if he is not to fall into the hands of the backstage group who dominated Korofindo" (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 1). His structural position among the Njelu elite continued to weaken his power. Furthermore, in 1951 we hear that, "He is unfortunately completely in the hands of the Roman Catholic Mission and in two instances this year he has clearly been voicing their views and not his own or his peoples". We are also told: "Though a young man and comparatively well educated, Nkosi Zulu has become more conservative than most of his people. By contrast, Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope was "a strong character with great energy but he, like Zulu, is in the hands of Peramiho" (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, pages 2-4). According to Redmond, part of the difference between the character of Mbonani and Njelu Chiefs can be attributed to the fact that Mbonani had lived outside the District for some years, and avoided internal politics, unlike Usanglia who had been enmeshed in factional struggles since his youth. Accordingly, Mbonani "had fewer debts to repay and obligations to uphold. Moreover, there were fewer pressures on him to follow traditional methods by the less diverse constituency of his smaller kingdom. Hence, he could be receptive to changes which he felt could benefit his people" (Redmond 1985:163). Either way, Mbonani approximated the ideal progressive chief under Indirect Rule. He understood and encouraged efforts to increase crop production in order to fund local services, and generally supported development programmes.

Stereotypes Reinvented, Rediscovered and Received

The arrival of an enthusiastic new Agricultural Officer in 1950, Basil Lumby, coincided with a considerable increase in the force applied to implement development programmes, especially a notorious tie-ridging campaign to reduce perceived soil erosion problems. Lumby was soon marching throughout the District on safaris with some 25 porters for up to three weeks duration. With the help of his field staff he prosecuted hundreds of farmers each month who had failed to tie their ridges, or grow the requisite acreage of food and cash crops, or simply for being drunk. Thus we encounter diary entries such as, "September 1952... Litola... Jumbe hopelessly tight... prosecuted" (TNA/155/127/V, SD September 1952). The candid records of these expeditions in his Safari Diaries reveal a great deal about a new post-War attitude to development, African society its relationship with the environment. With each

new posting such as Lumby's, many ethnic stereotypes were reinvented, rediscovered or received from older Songea hands. Opinions were largely formed on the spot from superficial visual cues, and rarely noticeably determined by preconceived tribal stereotypes. For example, Routledge toured southern Njelu in 1949:

Stopped at 2 villages on the way. One called Barabarani, would have pleased the heart of any Bwana Shamba, as it had approx. 30 acres of excellent maize, well weeded, and interplanted with groundnuts, beans, etc. The other was a complete contrast, maize had been planted late, it needed weeding, and it was apparent that laziness was the general pastime. Gave the headman a piece of my mind, and passed on the usual story (TNA/504/8/2A, SD February 1949).

Occasionally stereotypes were reversed, for example on this visit to the Ruvuma in southern Njelu: "the Wahyao people here are much better cultivation [sic] than the Wangoni... these people have made favourable progress" (TNA/155/127/V, SD October 1950, Lumby). Occasionally even Ndirima fared well, with De Chazal noting "beautiful madimbabas... very nice effort made by inhabitants of this area". And on a visit to Tingi there was a rare criticism of the Matengo: "Only ulezi – people lazy and apathetic" (TNA/155/127/V, SD August 1951). On the whole, however, old stereotypes were reinforced, for example, "The Wayao of the Lusewa and Mitomoni area continue in their non-progressive attitude and still appear to resent efforts by both government and their chief to improve their administration and increase their production" (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954, page 4). Concerning the Matengo: "As a tribe they remain hard working and first class agriculturalists and it is a real joy to travel through their heavily cultivated but mountainous country without seeing even incipient erosion" (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 2). The 1951 report states: "In the Matengos, one has perhaps the best agriculturalists in the Territory whilst with the Angoni one has one of the worst" (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 9). The stereotype had fully matured.

Judgements continued to be understood within a tribal framework. While Lumby was walking from Kilasi to Liparamba in Umatengo, his diary entry returns us to the relationship, first noted in 1932, between tribal homogeneity and agricultural performance: "People in this area are mostly Wangoni but are very mixed with Wahyao and Wamatengo. The country is hilly and owing to the mixture of tribes cultivations [sic] very poor" (TNA/155/127/V, SD October 1950). Similarly, five years later, another Agricultural Officer visited Liparamba in southern Njelu, remarking that: "Standard of cultivation very poor indeed. This is rather surprising as there is quite a sprinkling of Wamatengo here" (TNA/504/A/MR/D/SON 'B', SD January 1955). On visiting central Mshope, Lumby wrote of Mbonani's country, "I was

struck by the large number of lately deserted houses and shambas [farms]" (TNA/155/127/V, SD March 1951). This observation unwittingly reveals an interesting detail and an important conclusion. Between May 1950 and May 1951 two man-eating lions went on the rampage throughout the Gumbiro area killing fifty people before they were eventually shot. The whole area was disrupted for several months as people temporarily migrated to safer locations (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1952:44-52). Was Lumby's contact with the locals so superficial and uni-directional that he had not been aware of this fact? To a considerable extent judgements were based on visual cues – the aesthetics of development – as perceived by the trained expert. The opinions and analyses of Africans were irrelevant.

The Character of Rulers and the Condition of their Subjects

Lumby's tie-ridging campaign in Songea was almost unanimously resisted, but in different ways. Like his predecessors the new Nkosi Xaver of Njelu appears to have relied on passive resistance which was interpreted as indifference or conservatism. The response of Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope was also very much in character. By December 1950 he had had enough, and wrote to the DC:

I send you this letter with the intention of sending you an EXCEEDINGLY IMPORTANT PETITION, Bwana Mkubwa, from EVERYBODY IN OUR MSHOPE WANGONI GOVERNMENT, with some of their explanations regarding the NOTICE issued by the honourable Agricultural Officer, Bwana Mkubwa. The elders and all subjects, completely refuse THIS THREATENING ANNOUNCEMENT, Bwana Mkubwa. They completely refuse to follow its regulations, not even one of them.

After highlighting the unacceptable demand to tie-ridge their fields ("ngoro pits")¹⁷ and the restriction of millet production (the basis of local beer), and the damage these cause, the letter continued:

Is OUR SONGEA GOVERNMENT trying to destroy the subjects of Songea with FAMINE? HARVESTS are declining and if famine enters Songea it will cause chaos, due to the ORDER OF THE AGRICULTURAL OFFICER, because he does not listen to the local people regarding agriculture in this region, Bwana Mkubwa, and resorts to the power of his exceedingly menacing ORDERS! People are astonished and frightened, and finally they say it is better to die of hunger than from continuous, excessive PUNISHMENTS, Bwana Mkubwa (TNA/155/127/V, Mbonani to DC, 7/12/50. Original in Kiswahili).

¹⁷ The unfortunate choice by officials to translate 'tie-ridging' as 'Ngoro', the name of the Matengo pit-system of cultivation, had not helped, one official noting that it "increased opposition ten-fold".

Apart from the strength of tone setting Mbonani apart from his Njelu counterparts, of relevance here is his accusation that Lumby just “does not listen”. Mbonani’s campaign of resistance was a huge success. The following month, Lumby journeyed through 19 villages in Mshope, from Gumbiro to Mchomoro. He wrote:

Opposition to tie ridging was every where as acute as ever and a further excuse has now been thought of, i.e., ‘that we will not do tie-ridging until the Nkosi himself has tie-ridged his shambas and tells us to do so also.’ I am convinced that if the Nkosi is made to co-operate more himself the scheme will go ahead much faster (TNA/155/127/V, SD January 1951).

Lumby was probably correct to assume that the tie-ridging scheme would have proceeded faster if it had Mbonani’s support, but the influence of Native Authorities over other aspects of rural livelihoods is less certain. For officials like Lumby and Priestner, however, there was a direct causal link between the character of the local jumbe, nduna or nkosi, and the condition of their subjects. In Jumbe Mahinya’s village, under Nduna Fusi in central Njelu, Lumby wrote: “He is a good man and consequently his village was tidy and neat and almost all people having made some attempt to tie-ridge (TNA/155/127/V, SD February 1951). However, his impression of the ndunate as a whole was unfavourable: “The villagers under the rule of L. Fusse were nothing like so well cultivated as those in Nduna Nassoro area” (TNA/155/127/V, SD February 1951). A visit to Ngadinda, south of Lutukira in Mshope, revealed the same link:

One or two people live at Ngadinda on the south side of the river which is in Zulu country. The shambas of these people, miles away from anywhere were all beautifully tie-ridged and crops looked very well indeed. On crossing the river, into Mbonani’s country, a matter of three hundred yards or so, not one shamba was tie-ridged, no one having made any attempt. Shambas were dirty, full of striga and crops poor. By the time we reached camp, at the North-end of Ngadinda 70 people had been listed for prosecution. Nduna Mapole has not visited the area for 2 years and the Nkosi has not been here for at least four years (TNA/155/127/V, SD March 1951).

As in many parts of Tanganyika during this period, these new agricultural interventions were extremely unpopular. Indeed, support for the emerging nationalist movement in certain rural areas has often been attributed to the discord created by these policies although in Songea the link has rarely been made. The state of a community and character of a tribe were judged by its acceptance of these interventions and measured by superficial visual cues on the briefest of visits by European officials. Since implementation was the responsibility of the Native

Authorities, they were also considered responsible for the state of their subjects and their agriculture. The idea of a direct causal link between the quality of ruler and ruled was strengthened by a view that Native Authorities were somehow the embodiment of the particular attributes of their tribe or community. Within the tribal, systemic view of understanding African society, the differences between groups were perceived to be more significant than differences between individuals. The exception that proved the rule was of course Adviser Wabu of the Nyasa whose alien status explained the discrepancy between his competence and that of his subjects.

Official Recognition of the Ndendeuli, 1953

As we have seen, strong negative judgements of Njelu Native Authorities had been increasing for some time, but the black-and-white criticism of Njelu and contrasting praise of Ndendeuli so clearly portrayed by Gulliver in his 1954 *Administrative Survey* appears to have emerged as late as 1953. Only in this year do we get the first clear acknowledgement of the Ndendeuli as the tribe responsible for the majority of tobacco produced in the District. Chambers wrote:

By far the biggest producer is Undendeule division, where the people are more active than other places. Undendeule is also favoured by a newer soil and greater tree growth, making better leaf and better curing possible than in such places as Maposeni and Matogoro, where the soil has been robbed of its fertility by an indolent people. A very creditable production of 677 tons has been obtained, partly as a demonstration of local nationalism and partly because there has been a reorganisation of prices per kilo of the different grades of leaf... (TNA/155/Last Box, Songea District Suggested Agriculture Programme [SAP], 1953, page 6).

This quote also introduces the possibility that Njelu was at a disadvantage due to its spent soils, but yet again this does not dampen the preference for a cultural explanation. Ecological differences resulting from settlement densities are reinterpreted to be the direct consequence of the poor agricultural practices of an indolent people.

Arguably, the reason Ndendeuli were so rarely acknowledged as the main tobacco producers until 1953 was because their separatist campaign which had been gathering force for several years had only just erupted after the death of Mbonani in November 1952. Indeed until this time, as we have seen, even the name Ndendeuli was hardly ever used; they were officially referred to as part of Mshope Ngoni. From 1953 it became officially possible to think of Ndendeuli as a separate category. The official recognition of Ndendeuli as potentially a 'proper' tribe worthy of its own Native Authority, and thus separate from the Ngoni, instantly created a new point of reference for judging the 'true' Ngoni of central Mshope and

Njelu and their former *sutu* neighbours. The tribal characters of Ngoni and Ndendeuli could now be polarised – as conservative versus progressive. Such a polarity could not be made for those pre-existing categories, Njelu and Mshope, because there were no outstanding differences between the populations as a whole; the differences were between the traditional metropolises of Ngoni society and the Ndendeuli on their eastern frontier. As a result, in 1954 we hear of Undendeuli:

This Division is potentially the most progressive of all those in the District. The people have a real desire to develop their land and this has, to a large extent, been encouraged by the fact that Undendeule has now been granted its own Native Authority not subject to the Mshope Native Authority. [...] Agricultural production in the Division was considerably increased over previous years and alone has been responsible for 46% of the tobacco crop marketed through the Ngoni-Matengo Co-operative Union Ltd. during the year (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954, page 5).

The claim that their increased production was a consequence of their new official recognition hides the more plausible explanation that the officials could only now recognise their long-standing achievements. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that by 1953 the Ndendeuli were unanimously favoured by the administration, although this was the impression given by Gulliver in 1954. In July 1953, Brookbank arrived in Mgombasi, Undendeuli, at a time when probably the entire rural population of Songea had been sensitised to the dangers of contact with agricultural staff. He found it “a very dirty place and the people most uncooperative” and unable to show him round the fields or to find the owners of certain houses. They were “pretty strong minded” about their opposition to tie-ridging, and Brookbank concluded, “These Wandendeule seem to be the most stupid people yet seen in Songea District” (TNA/504/8/2B, SD July 1953). The negative stereotype of Njelu however was now unequivocal. In February 1955, Brookbank visited Maposeni “to have a look around”. He found no tobacco planted and very poor standard of cultivation. He wrote: “The people around here said to be very Vichwa ngumu [hard headed] since the days of Mr Stenhouse. It was here that tobacco was first started, but now none is grown” (TNA/504/A/MR/D/SON ‘B’, SD February 1955). He concluded his diary entry with the words: “Rather a depressing finish to a journey into the depressed Area of Songea” (TNA/504/A/MR/D/SON ‘B’, SD February 1955).

Eventually, Albert Kangara was selected to be the new Nkosi of Mshope, and he appears to have been less forceful than his predecessor was. A Field Officer wrote in January 1955: “the new King is very pleasant but does not seem very strong agriculturally” (TNA/504/A/MR/D/SON ‘B’, SD January 1955). However by this time there had been a remarkable reversal in district agricultural policy. The sense of urgency surrounding the tie-ridging and food crop campaigns suddenly gave way to a new focus on encouragement of progressive farmers and groups. The change in emphasis however had not erased the considerable resentment and culture of resistance among Songea Native Authorities. At the end of 1955, Brookbank wrote of the “most discouraging” reluctance of the Native Authorities to cooperate with the touring officers: “Too often one hears of more pressing engagements elsewhere, malaise and indisposition which prevent local dignitaries from walking round shambas” (TNA/504/8/1, SDAAR 1955, page 3). The response however was definitely worse in Njelu, whose Authorities continued with their passive resistance. Throughout the year Brookbank struggled to persuade Njelu Native Authorities to offer five acres of land for agricultural demonstration plots, and he took the unprecedented step of abandoning further extension work:

Ngoni-Njellu and its chief have distinguished themselves by being uninterested in agricultural matters and have provided obstruction to Departmental policy. Njellu is therefore being abandoned agriculturally, though individual progressive cultivators of the area are being assisted as much as possible (TNA/504/8/1, SDAAR 1955).

Meanwhile, the new Native Authority in Undendeuli, Nasoro Kaswera, had rapidly become the administration’s favourite local leader.¹⁸ In 1955 his support ensured that Brookbank could eventually secure the single acre of land required for a trial plot, and land for a nursery in Namtumbo (TNA/504/A/MR/D/SON ‘B’, SD September 1955). In the following year, Brookbank reported on their progress: “In Undendeule the Native Authority is greatly interested in the progress of these plots, and it is intended to use them as centres of information and education”. In recognition of Undendeuli responsiveness, the Empire Day show was held in Namtumbo (SDA/SDAAR 1956, pages 13, 15).

By 1955, then, the Agriculture Department in Songea had very clear opinions about the state of agriculture in the District and the overwhelming extent to which its cause could be

¹⁸ Better known as ‘Tanitatu’ (Three Tons) on account of his size (and as ‘Three Ton Tony’ in European circles).

attributed to tribal character. In his proposals for agricultural policy, Brookbank outlined his new approach to target progressive groups with encouragement and demonstration rather than force. His proposals were strikingly 'tribalistic':

Priority of Attention. First attention should be given Undendeuli, then Mshope, then Umatengo, followed by the Lake shore. Ukena is placed near the end because of difficult travelling conditions, though the country and the people themselves are very worthy of attention. Ungoni is placed last because of the general lack of interest in agricultural matters and overall inactivity of the people (TNA/155/Last Box, Draft Agric. Policy, September 1955, page 13).

In the last years of colonial rule, however, talk of tribal differences had begun to vanish from Songea District reports with a new politically correct discourse of modernity and development based on a continuation of the 'focal point' approach to agricultural development of targeting progressive individuals and groups. A final burst of tribal character judgement came in 1959, with Wise's description of the economy in Maposeni, the new headquarters of Nkosi Xaver in Njelu: "Even when compared with the rest of Njellu which is poor, the comparison is most unfavourable to Maposeni/Ndirima. The fields are smaller, the people more listless, and more than average of the active adult males depend upon work outside the area for their livelihood. A walk around the fields at any time of the year will find very few men working" (Wise 1959:10). By 1959, the nationalist movement that was flourishing elsewhere in the District had only just emerged in Njelu. Nevertheless, by this time, the European preoccupation with tribal character appears strangely anachronistic.

Late-Colonial Constructions of Songea Society

The Ngoni as a "Dying System"

Returning to Gulliver's quote at the beginning of the chapter where he noted the downfall of Ngoni character since the early 1930s, he continued, "What, then, has happened to change the Ngoni during the intervening years?" He reasoned as follows: "The principal answer to this complicated problem lies in the fact that the Ngoni have been living on the strength of an old, glorious tradition without carving out a new one in the modern world". He argued that the *raison d'être* of Ngoni life and ambition had formerly been military achievement, but the Europeans removed this basis of life with colonial conquest, and subsequent brutal and humiliating suppression of the Maji Maji rebellion: "Nothing new emerged however, and the

introduction of Indirect Rule merely formalised a dying system” (Gulliver 1954:114). The fact that the Ngoni had a reputation for being obedient and not causing trouble was also seen as a shirking of responsibility, which strengthened the overall impression of apathy and backwardness. “Indeed,” wrote Gulliver, “the great trouble is the colossal indifference to or passive acceptance of life as it is. And this is true of both chiefs and subjects” (1954:117). An additional dimension to the “dying system” analysis was to be found in the Ngoni response to missionary activity. With the Benedictines working hard throughout central Njelu, Mshope and Umatengo, and competing with UMCA on the Lake Shore, he noted that, “The Songea District has been called, doubtless rightly, the most mission-ised part of Tanganyika” (1954:123). These areas were by the mid-1950s overwhelmingly, at least nominally, Christian under direct supervision of European parish priests, while Undendeuli and Yao areas were Muslim. With some 225 European missionaries in the Peramiho Diocese in 1951, he wrote:

The Christian Ngoni therefore tends to acquire an inferiority complex, a despairing feeling that he can never reach the standards of these aliens who have brought and taught the new creed, and a notion that however hard he tries he will nevertheless be corrected by the superior white man. In consequence of this contrast, the Moslem is more sure of himself and his moral conduct, and he suffers less from divided allegiance, uneasy conscience and moral and mental confusion (Gulliver 1954:123).

Despite the implications of this quote, Gulliver countered the suggestion, made by others, that over-missionisation was the root cause of “Ngoni stagnation and torpor”. He highlighted the tremendous efforts of the Benedictines in education, hospitals, agriculture and crafts as well as subsidiary services like post and banking facilities, marketing of produce, and so on, none of which was being done by the Muslims (1954:123). Despite these efforts, Gulliver noted, the practical results were “depressingly meagre”, with poor standards of living, hygiene, literacy, agriculture, and building. To top it all, “Morally, almost every European prefers the Moslem to the Christian as a general rule” (1954:123). It was the “human material with which they have to deal” rather than the missionaries themselves that was mostly to blame, except for that “certain feeling of inferiority” generated by the unusually large numbers of Europeans working amongst them. He concluded, “This feeling does nothing to restore their general confidence and initiative in their modern lives” (1954:124).

The underlying concept in this analysis is that of a “dying system”, created by conquest and formalised by Indirect Rule which offered nothing positive to replace the glorious old way of life; hence the hopeless clinging to the past. The administrative responsibilities of Indirect Rule were incompatible with these traditional values, there being no tradition of administration in the pre-colonial Ngoni society. The best efforts of European

missionaries effectively suppressed them further, psychologically if not politically, leaving them aimless and helpless. This analysis is a classic product of late-colonial thought; its internal logic is as clear and consistent as its imagining of African tribal social organisation, and rooted in contemporary functionalist theory. A tribal society was a discrete bounded system in which every individual had a role in sustaining its stability through adherence to customary values, laws and institutions. Destroy any element in this organic whole and the outcome is a dying system – a system in collapse. The symptoms are expressed as a divergence from the goals of colonial economic and (later, political) development. Like a sick man, a dying tribal society was lacking in vitality, energy, and spirit, and resisted the stresses of a changing modern world. By accepting the contemporary terms for judging success under colonial rule, this analysis fails to consider the possibility that countless individuals and groups within Ngoni society were in fact actively creating viable livelihoods and succeeding very well on their own terms.

The Boundary Problem

More than any other issue, the boundary problem preoccupied the minds of Songea officials throughout the colonial period and numerous judgements and statements were made regarding how it was impeding development. The problem, as stated by Gulliver, was this: “There are no internal, territorial boundaries within the Njelu chiefdom; thus ndunas, jumbes and wanyapara have no specific area for which, or for the people of which, they are administratively responsible” (Gulliver 1954:51). The population was fairly homogenous in the immediate vicinity of each *baraza*, but elsewhere there was a “considerable intermixture of people of different allegiances”. There was almost no sizeable area for which the population owed allegiance to a single nduna. Typically they were subjects of two, three or even four ndunas and a similar number of jumbes, and the intermixture was even higher in Songea town. This situation had been seen by the administration since 1925 as a fundamental cause of inefficiency in tax collection and court work, and in areas of particularly heterogeneous population, administrative duties became “almost everybody’s and therefore nobody’s responsibility”. Ndunas and jumbes were apparently very reluctant to administer people who did not “belong” to them (1954:51). With the establishment of boundaries, the limits of authority and responsibility would be clearly known.

From a present-day perspective, these concerns with administrative efficiency, and the responsibility and accountability of its agents, appear entirely reasonable – one of the legitimate functions of the state. The boundary problem can be seen as part of a broader process running through development intervention in Songea, namely the effort to create

territorial, bounded communities, each with its own authority who had powers to control land use and residence rights, encourage crop production, mobilise labour, and administer services. Behind its benign technocratic justifications lay a second goal of social and political control that prompted individual acts of resistance (cf. Scott 1998). Throughout the period of Indirect Rule the process of administrative rationalisation was conceived within a tribal model of African society. Arguably, this is exactly why the boundary problem was not resolved until the hereditary tribal structures of administration had given way to modern democratic councils that transcended tribal loyalties in favour of nationalist models of citizenship. The tribal model also meant that the boundary problem became another way of judging the character of local ethnic groups. Since it was easier to solve in Undendeuli and Mshope than in Njelu, the latter was soon judged to be conservative due to their unwillingness to accept these inevitable and necessary reforms. Gulliver identified three reasons for the problem: First “the deep feeling of a personal allegiance between an nduna and his people on which no territorial limits are set”. Secondly “the aftermath of the Maji Maji revolt scattered the Ngoni far and wide.” And finally “Since Maji Maji, people have been able to move freely as they wish” (1954:55). With each reason, Gulliver’s analysis both presupposes and reconfirms Ngoni conservatism. As such it is inseparable from the intellectual constraints of Indirect Rule.

Gulliver’s analysis began with an account of pre-colonial settlement patterns and spatial organisation. He concluded that, there had never been any conception of a relationship between a group of people and a piece of territory: “The significant connection, in Ngoni ideas, was between the nduna and his people, on a personal basis between lord and serf”. This was because serfs were almost all war captives from diverse geographical origins. “The serf liked to live near his nduna where his military services could most easily be obtained as required, and where the nduna could most easily keep a watch on him. When the nduna shifted, his serfs followed” (Gulliver 1954:53). The fact that each nduna’s following remained a fairly compact entity was merely an indirect expression of this fundamental link between nduna and adherent. Arguably, the greater emphasis that Gulliver puts on this link, at the expense of a link between people and territory, was a consequence of the intellectual constraints of a contemporary functionalist framework that presupposed the existence of unchangeable customary laws, values and institutions. Effectively he invented a tradition of non-territoriality that was permanently held by all members of the tribe. Having done so, he reinterpreted their resistance to territoriality as conservatism. By contrast, the descriptions of pre-colonial settlement patterns in the centre of Njelu society given in the previous chapter suggest that village settlement patterns were intimately bound up with the hierarchical, segmentary social organisation, with concentric rings of habitation according to status. Rights

to use land for residence or cultivation were allocated by rulers within a specific territory agreed upon with neighbouring ndunas. As land shortages intensified in the years immediately preceding relocation of an nduna's settlement, control over land would surely also have intensified, as would the relationship between the group and its territory. Even after a group had relocated, trees would have been planted, graves established and ancestors recalled, leading to enduring rights over previously occupied land. Even if there had never been a link between nduna and territory, as Gulliver asserts, this hardly means that their grandchildren were unable to develop such a relationship more than fifty years later. But the belief in the permanence of tribal tradition prevented this possibility from emerging, reconfirming the sense of Ngoni conservatism.

Gulliver's second reason stems from the idea that, had the settlement pattern described above continued into the colonial period, there probably would not have been a boundary problem (as was apparently the case among Central African Ngoni groups). However, the repression of the Maji Maji rebellion, with its considerable demographic disruption "shattered the structure of the chiefdom and the old system could never be resumed afterwards" (1954:53). Over the coming two decades, innumerable refugees returned to Ungoni from neighbouring districts in family groups, or in groups under *madoda*, or in new communities of mixed origin. Some returned to former homes; others settled in previously uninhabited land in the south and east, freed for the first time from Ngoni control. The Germans utilised the old allegiances between ndunas and followers for tax collection "for want of anything better" and at that stage they would not have been overly concerned with boundary formation anyway (1954:54). Once again, a shattered system is seen as the key to understanding Ngoni backwardness. Gulliver interprets the historical facts of Maji Maji as more than demographic disruption and removal of the majority of Ngoni rulers – suppression of the rebellion literally shattered the Ngoni social system. Within the tribal framework, a viable society was conceived as a stable system rather than some hundred thousand individuals all actively responding to changing circumstances. The notion of 'system' is inseparable from the notion of its collapse, and a diagnosis of a society in collapse can only reinforce the sense of conservatism, since, like a living organism, only a viable system is able to respond positively to change.

Gulliver's third reason was that during British rule there had been an almost complete lack of restriction on movement of people within the District, heightened by the normal practices of shifting cultivation. People could relocate near friends or avoid ndunas or jumbes who were unpleasant in preference for those who had no authority over them. "Under a stagnant administrative system a man had but to pay his tax to his nduna's baraza to carry out almost the whole of his civic duties as far as either he or the nduna appreciated them".

Consequently, the four decades after Maji Maji resulted in considerable shifting of people in relation to their rulers. Importantly, however, “Through all this kaleidoscopic movement, men retained in principle the tradition of personal bonds with the old nduna or his due successor” (1954:54). This analysis also depends on the strength of the “tradition of personal bonds” in pre-colonial society, which I argue he had already over-emphasized. What we need is a greater understanding of the meanings of ‘bonds of allegiance’ for both rulers and subjects during British rule, in order to understand the charge of conservatism. Gulliver himself has already given a number of good reasons why subjects might actively choose to move away from their Native Authorities. As we will see, this is not conservatism, but ‘voting with your feet’ against government control.

Throughout the British period it seems that it is the rulers who are most interested in retaining those traditional bonds while the commitment of their subjects was rather less enthusiastic. Indeed, in support of reform, Gulliver highlighted the successful case of the people of Liparamba, in southern Njelu, who were put under a new nduna. The people “felt much less strongly about the matter” than their former nduna, although there were a few brief protests. It was the older generation that had resisted, but most saw the change as a potential step towards greater communications, which was in fact soon realised with the building of a road to market tobacco and other produce (1954:58). Gulliver failed to note that early British accounts of the boundary problem characterised bonds of allegiance as exploitative. In 1922, plans to rationalise authorities and boundaries were described with the note that, “Native authorities are keen on the retention of their adherents as they mean profit and prestige, while the segregated subjects are not anxious for closer union as they are less subject to discipline” (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922).¹⁹ In 1933, the ‘customary rule’ for understanding bonds of allegiance was “Wangoni claim heads not land”, which implies that the subjects, like cattle, had rather less at stake from the relationship than their rulers. The DC appeared to share this view:

Chiefs and headmen have been advised to adopt territorial boundaries as domestic slavery cannot be tolerated and should the question come to a head Government will have to side with the people. Chiefs and headmen will

¹⁹ In 1931, Ngoni resistance to boundaries was seen as part of their “wanderlust”, “which sent them from Zululand to Songea as warrior-invaders in 1820/40 and which sends them now to work in Kilosa and the coast as peace-time labourers” (TNA/SDB, 6F). Despite this, the forceful District Commissioner, FWC Morgans, went to considerable efforts to institute boundaries and came across such opposition, from Nkosi Usangila in particular, that the idea was postponed immediately following Morgans’ departure. In 1933 renewed efforts to solve the problem were seen as difficult in Ungoni “owing to domestic subjection prevailing and persons able to live anywhere, but still remain the man of the representative of the family to whom he or his forebears were allotted when they submitted or were captured” (TNA/155/222, H/O Notes, 29/5/33).

retain their prestige by admitting this voluntarily and not waiting to have their hands forced by their subjects (TNA/155/222, H/O Notes, 29/5/33).

The boundary problem constituted “the biggest headache of all” during the 1948 census, and its solution once again became a top priority. The DC wrote, “The Native Authorities will probably be strongly opposed, firstly because they will fear reduction in ‘their’ people with a consequent loss of face and what may perhaps be described as ‘hidden emoluments’, and secondly because a reduction in people means a reduction in pay in the case of those Jumbes who get paid according to the number of taxes collected” (TNA/155/10/6, 29/9/48, page 2). However, by 1951, it seems that bonds of allegiance were no longer regarded as exploitative (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 2).

Thus, incentives to retain bonds of allegiance were largely those of the rulers rather than the ruled. At one point, however, Gulliver does acknowledge that “greater gains” were realised by the ndunas and jumbes rather than their adherents: “Indigenously, the larger the number of people under him the higher his prestige, and authority both in his own eyes and those of other Ngoni – though other factors are also involved” (1954:56). Under colonial rule, people shifted about for multiple reasons, and were free to invest in social networks to gain access to productive resources or political and social opportunities. Any resistance to administrative reform by these subjects was arguably much less to do with a stubborn clinging to traditional bonds of allegiance and much more to do with the uncertainty that reorganisation and appointment of new authorities brought into their lives. There may have been considerable advantages to be gained by choosing to live among a heterogeneous population and a number of headmen, not least the flexibility it offered for negotiation and social manoeuvring to sustain viable and secure livelihoods (c.f. Berry 1993). Alternatively, the location of ones jumbe or nduna might have been largely irrelevant, and this possibility would be a fruitful avenue for further research. Either way, contemporary constructions of society favoured an interpretation that stressed the enduring nature of tribal structures and attitudes.

The third and final basis of opposition, in Gulliver’s analysis, was unreconstructed conservatism itself: “the enduring conservatism of the people, ndunas and people alike, – a resistance to change as such”. He saw the sources of conservatism as twofold: “a reluctance to abrogate ties with a nostalgic past, and the contemporary backwardness of Ngoni society and Ngoni ideas and attitudes” (1954:55). He continued: “As a result of my enquiries and my conversations [sic] with all ranks of people, I feel that sheer conservatism has been and still is the principal obstacle to reform, although it is commonly expressed (if at all) in the guise of many subsidiary arguments” (1954:57).

As a result of the way in which the boundary problem was constructed and analysed, Njelu, again, fared very badly compared to its neighbours. The problem had always been simpler in Mshope, on account of the fewer number of ndunates spread over a larger area. To some extent, each group under a single nduna was surrounded by uninhabited country, and the demarcation of boundaries was fairly obvious (see Map 21). Furthermore, there was the role of Nkosi Mbonani who, according to Gulliver, “came to realise the values of reorganisation, and who had the initiative and forcefulness to introduce boundaries”. Between 1950 and 1953 all ndunate and most jumbeate boundaries had been determined, largely attributable to his efforts (1954:59). Thus, through engagement with the boundary problem in the mid-1950s, Ndendeuli could be seen as progressive – but only through default – while Njelu conservatism was unequivocal.

Structural Constraints to Development in Maposeni

District Officer R. Wise took Gulliver’s generalised analysis to the village level with his contribution to a report on the Maposeni Nutrition Scheme in 1959, the outcome of a coordinated investigation to formulate policy to improve the nutritional and economic status of the people in Maposeni, the Native Authority headquarters in the heart of Njelu. The Scheme was prompted initially by “the particularly shocking cases seen at the dispensary” which led to a fact-finding mission in 1958. Its members “were all convinced that the various symptoms, the ill-health, the very poor fields, the apathy and the appearance of the people were part of the same problem and demanded an approach of a kind not hitherto experienced” (TNA/155/coop27/V, Maposeni Nutrition Scheme, Carpenter, page 1). Herein lies a prototype of the integrated rural development programmes that were in vogue during the 1970s and 1980s. Being the new seat of Nkosi Xaver, Maposeni inherited the poor reputation of neighbouring Ndirima as a “particularly unreceptive area” with “deep seated sociological problems” which had prevented much progress (Carpenter, page 2). In health care, a medical doctor pointed out, “One of the main difficulties is that people did not even appreciate that a problem existed” (Latham, page 6).

Both Gulliver and Wise located the problem of Ngoni backwardness in the structure of its society. While Gulliver argued that Ngoni society was a dying system due to colonial impact, Wise’s analysis claims that pre-colonial Ngoni society was also unstable, and merely crystallised by European rule, although the precise impact of early colonialism remains ambiguous:

Until the Europeans arrived the political organisation rested on an unstable balance of conflicting personalities and this instability had not had time to resolve before the Europeans arrived. The assumption of power by the Germans therefore froze political development at an arbitrary point in time, leaving unresolved many personal rivalries and jealousies. [...] Many of these personal rivalries and jealousies were drastically resolved by the stern German repression of the Maji-Maji rebellion, when the majority of the Ngoni leaders were massacred. Despite, or because of this, Njellu is still an unstable area to which the inability of the leaders to agree upon internal boundaries bears striking witness (TNA/155/coop27/V, Maposeni Nutrition Scheme, Wise, page 9).

A second aspect of Wise's analysis also rests upon elements in its social structure, namely the *madoda*, or pre-colonial headmen, who were not formally recognised by either the Germans or British, although some *madoda* became jumbes. "This has meant that a traditional route for advancement in the society was denied to the above-average man", he explained (Wise, page 9). By 1959 *madoda*, however, according to Wise, were still able to control fairly large areas of land. Members of the *lidoda*'s extended family were all dependent upon him for their fields. Furthermore, newcomers to the village needed to carry out a formal interview with the *nkosi* to get his approval to relocate there. In doing so the *nkosi* established the reasons for the stranger's move, and whether or not he was likely to be troublesome or useful. If the *nkosi* approved, he would request a *lidoda* to show the stranger where to build a house and where to cultivate (Wise, pages 9-12). The special role of the *madoda* was placed at the centre of a tentative hypothesis on the problems of the area:

The traditional authorities, in particular the land-allocating *Madoda*, are reacting against the loss of their former prestige and opportunities for advancement by restricting the amount of land which they allocate both to strangers and to the descendants of former captives and others who still live in the area. Thus by having larger fields themselves they are able to maintain an economic ascendancy (TNA/155/coop27/V, Maposeni Nutrition Scheme, Wise, page 12).

Thus, Wise neatly brought together a number of disparate observations into a single model (the process itself was characteristic of colonial social analysis). There had been a steadily declining population over the past thirty years and newcomers were not entering, because the *madoda* were restricting access to land, as mentioned above. As a result, little agriculture of any kind was taking place; the fields were small and inadequate; men were forced to migrate and cultivation was carried out primarily by women. Despite large areas of under-utilised bush, land was not being allocated for farming (and although not explicitly mentioned, this would account for the low tobacco production). The reason why the *madoda* were doing this, suggested Wise, was that they were denied opportunities for progress under the government

system, and were obliged to cling onto their ability to control land access as the only means to remain above their former serfs and potential newcomers, economically, politically, and socially. Hence the “hostility from all the local leaders, Nkosi and Madoda” (Wise, page 12).

Perhaps this is still a valid analysis. Perhaps there would have been little opportunity for keen young tobacco growers to cultivate five acres each on Maposeni land. The difficulties for the administration in obtaining land for demonstration plots suggests how this control had been exercised in other ways. Here as elsewhere, access to productive resources was through investment in social networks, and these were hierarchical and strengthened by both Indirect Rule and the Catholic Church. Although not explicitly spelled out by Wise, perhaps the structures of power in Maposeni resisted the emergence of the values and institutions that might have grown up around tobacco production. On the other hand, the analysis plays down more mundane explanations for the apparently low importance attached to agriculture, the most important being the diverse local economy that had grown around the opportunities provided by the mission. A detailed analysis of these numerous interlinked factors, and the extent to which they can be seen as manifestations of a relationship between frontier and metropole, is given in Chapters Five and Six. In doing so, I hope to explore further how these strong representations of ethnicity came into being, how they persisted to the present-day, and their material implications for the livelihoods of Songea residents.

Conclusions

This chapter presented an analysis of the changing representations of tribes and authorities in the District between 1920 and 1960. When viewed from a present-day perspective, Gulliver’s assertion of a deterioration in Ngoni society over the period of British rule cannot be sustained. Rather, the perceived decline is an artefact derived from changing standards by which ethnicity was to be imagined and judged by European administrators and officials. Most significantly, the development of the colonial cash crop and labour migrant economy in Songea that provided the reference points for judgements, as well the accompanying ideology of capitalist economic development that pitted tradition against modernity, or conservatism against progress.²⁰ The metropolitan areas of the former Ngoni State – central Njelu and Mshope – fared particularly badly in comparison with what appeared to be their dynamic progressive industrious neighbours – Ndendeuli, Matengo and Bena. The Yao and Nyasa were also failures under these criteria, and, like the other groups, the reasons were seen to lie

primarily in the inherent characteristics of each tribe. For Europeans, Colonial African society consisted of homogenous tribes where differences between individuals were less significant than the differences between tribes. Native Authorities' characters were seen both as a reflection of these tribal characteristics but also as the individuals to be held directly responsible for them. As a result judgements of tribal character were heavily gendered with a male-oriented character. The bias towards group level, cultural explanations must be seen as a consequence of this tribal model of African society that underpinned Indirect Rule. The ideology of Indirect Rule will certainly have changed during the British period, perhaps with a decreasing emphasis on biological and evolutionary differences between tribes in favour of acquired cultural characteristics deriving from 'customary' laws, institutions and attitudes. Nevertheless such a trend is not apparent in the history of representations of natives in Songea. Instead one is left with the impression of continuity in the way in which ethnicity was constructed and how this construction allowed the emergence of clear ethnic stereotypes in Songea by the mid-1950s.

The construction of ethnicity was integral to the construction of conservatism or progressivism, and thus how interventions were conceived and justified. By returning to the roots of these representations, we can see how society more generally needs to be imagined within a developmentalist state. The late-colonial picture of African society as a patchwork of interlocking, organic, stable systems encouraged contemporary observers to think in terms of group-level characterisations rather than recognising internal heterogeneity of action, belief or purpose. The notion of tribal society as an organic system also implied the notion of a healthy society. Meanwhile the hegemonic discourse of development forced tribal characterisations onto a linear scale of tradition versus modernity – conservative versus progressive – dying versus vital. Furthermore, there was the implication that a tribal group was open to manipulation, direction and control from outside agents, i.e. the state. This offered the prospect of curing the Ngoni of their conservatism through a certain kind of centrally controlled intervention. Since Ngoni society had a single overriding problem – conservatism – a single solution was required: they needed to be dragged into the modern world. At first this solution was based upon coercion, but with the spectacular failure of tie-ridging and grow-more-crops campaigns, there was a rapid switch to encouragement and demonstration. Neither approach was based upon an appreciation of the heterogeneity within a community. This is not just of academic interest, since there are remarkable continuities in the way African society is constructed today. Although tribal categories carry less weight, the fundamental diagnosis of African society as a more or less viable system means that

²⁰ In addition to economic development, there was from 1950 a programme of local government

development intervention has swung between the two extremes of coercion and voluntarism ever since.

reform, which was also a means of judging ethic groups and authorities (see Chapter Seven).

Islamic Networks and Christian Missions, 1898-1955

At the time of German Conquest in 1897 the vast majority of Africans throughout Songea District did not adhere to Christianity or Islam. The exceptions were the Muslims at Arab trading posts in Njelu. The following year, German Benedictine missionaries established themselves in central Njelu and soon after in Umatengo. Over the next five decades they expanded rapidly in the western half of the District as far as the shores of Lake Nyasa. However they failed to establish themselves in the east. Meanwhile Islam advanced through a variety of indigenous agents, filling the gaps in the missionaries' maps, and by the time of National Independence a rough line could be drawn, north-to-south through Lumecha, which divided Catholics in the west from Muslims in the east. This 'fault-line' approximately formed the boundary when Songea District was divided into two in 2002, and on either side there are still differences in levels of education as a consequence of unequal distribution of missionary influence. Previous work on the spread of Christianity and Islam in Songea has tended to view the majority of the African population as passive recipients of Christianity or Islam whose religious choices were a function of the degree of effort expended by their respective agents. Thus, Iliffe wrote of Undendeuli: "Islamic proselytisers... found success in a region neglected by missionaries" (Iliffe 1979:257). Recently, the Abbot of Peramiho Mission, Lambert Doerr has rightly criticised Iliffe's position for ignoring their considerable efforts in eastern Songea, and their genuine concerns about the rise of Islam in the region (Doerr 1998:118).

This chapter gives a history of Christianity and Islam in colonial Songea that restores the agency of local responses to religious choice. In doing so we discover not only that these choices were often highly political, but that the culture of emerging Islamic society in the east developed a character that reflected its origins in religious and ethnic conflict. Detailed studies of archival records for four mission stations in the east of Songea – Kitanda, Ligera, Namabengo and Mtyangimbole – show the importance of Islamic resistance to the

establishment of Christianity, as well as aspects of the relationships between ethnic identity, social organisation, and religious choice. I consider the responses and interpretations of the Ndendeuli secessionist movement from each of these stations, and examine material from recent oral histories. This leads us to conclusions about how changes in religious belief and practice were an expression of the relationship between frontier and metropole in Songea history.

Establishment of Christianity and Islam, 1898-1955

The Advance of Catholicism

The methods by which Catholicism and Islam were established in Songea differed considerably. The top down approach of the Benedictines, underpinned ideologically by *Volksmission* theory and its later incarnations under Indirect Rule, was instituted through a powerful, hierarchical, centralised structure of missions, outposts and bush schools controlled from Peramiho and overseen ultimately by Rome. Its agents were well-resourced Europeans, culturally and ideologically detached from local Africans, who provided powerful role models of authority, morality and modernity – values which were also embodied in impressive churches in prominent locations throughout the District. The extensive system of bush schools penetrated almost every community in Njelu, helping to stabilise the rural population and bring them under greater control. Their focus upon the ruling African elite and their intimate links with the administration – in particular its education objectives – ensured that Catholicism was seen by many to be synonymous with the state – both the European Colonial Government and the Ngoni-dominated Native Authorities. When the new Bishop was inaugurated in 1953, the slogan for the occasion was, “To serve Christ means to rule” (Peramiho Chronicle 1955:33), symbolising how conversion to Christianity was partly a demonstration of political adherence that was both racial and ethnic in character. With the elevation of ethnicity as the recognised form of political expression under Indirect Rule from 1926 the ethnic dimension to religious choice was to take on increasing significance.

The establishment of the first mission station at Peramiho in central Njelu was explicitly seen as a force against the spread of both Islam and Protestantism. The Benedictine representative in Dar es Salaam, Fr Maurus Hartmann wrote in 1898: “For the present the Wangoni are not yet Islamic. However, it is high time that the Christian religion becomes active as soon as possible in order to save this promising people from the danger of Islam which would make it perhaps for ever inaccessible for Christianity” (Doerr 1998:6). Despite

cordial relations with Nkosi Mputa from the start, in Njelu, as elsewhere, early Christian converts were not the local elite, but marginal people with more to gain from innovation, and the first adherents were mainly the children of former slaves (Doerr 1998:15). Similarly, at first it was the *sutu* boys who were sent to the new school in Peramiho rather than the 'true' Ngoni (Doerr 1998:20). Indeed, this trend was reflected at the level of the society, whereby dominant groups such as Hehe and Sangu were uninterested in missionary activity while their dependants on the frontiers of these powerful states, such as Bena, Nyiha and Safwa, were more hospitable, often because they offered protection from raiding as well as trade links and political support (Wright 1971). However, for the Ngoni, the pattern was reversed, with a rapidly growing Christian population at the Njelu metropole, and adoption of Islam among the Ndendeuli and Yao on the eastern frontier.

Progress in Njelu was rapid. Despite the wartime internment of German personnel from 1916 the number of converts increased dramatically through the efforts of African catechists to 13,000 by the time of their return in 1922 (Doerr 1998:83-91). Already there were signs that the east of Songea was falling behind. Contemporary accounts make it clear that the authorities in Peramiho were well aware of the risk that Islam would spread unless a mission was established on the eastern peripheries (Doerr 1998:71). From 1926 progress could resume, with the establishment of missions at Mahanje in northern Mshope in 1926, Matimira in 1928, Matagoro in 1930 near Songea town which was seen as a barrier against the spread of Islam since the town was an established stronghold. Namabengo was established in 1934, Mtyangimbole became independent in 1938 near the seat of Nkosi Mbonani, and Ligera in 1939 (Doerr 1998:104-112). Careful diplomacy ensured that deportation of German missionaries was avoided during the Second World War, but no new station could be established, and very few schools (Doerr 1998:169-70). The first African priests were ordained, and a start made to the impressive Peramiho abbey which was completed in 1948 (Doerr 1998:176-9). With the ordination of a new Abbot-Bishop, Eberhard, in 1953 the number of Catholics in Songea District was close to 150,000 under the spiritual and practical guidance of 81 priests (including seven Africans), 69 brothers and 165 sisters (including 77 Africans) (Doerr 1998:209). As indicated in Maps 22 and 23, the distribution of Catholics, and their European mentors, was overwhelmingly skewed towards the west, a pattern that has persisted to the present-day.

Islamic Networking

Islam in Songea District had nothing like this kind of structured and strategic organisation. And in stark contrast to the well-recorded history of the Benedictines, the development of

Islam evades authoritative historical reconstruction because of its lack of a centralised authority and coherent programme of development. Gallagher's account of Islam in Undendeuli is drawn largely from oral sources and contains many uncertainties, inconsistencies, and omissions reflecting the character of his object of study (Gallagher 1971). Nevertheless, he gave a good sense of the agents and processes at work. In particular, he highlighted the sequential process of Islamic institution building through the establishment of mosques, schools and *tarikas* (sufi brotherhoods) and identified three key agents of proselytisation: the government official, the returned labour migrant, and the trader (Gallagher 1971:141-2).

Islam was first introduced to Ungoni in the first half of the nineteenth century through Yao traders from present-day Mozambique who had had a centuries-long engagement with Islamic traders on the coast (Gallagher 1971:63). In 1874, the first Arab ivory and slave trader, Rashid bin Masudi, commenced his operations in Ungoni and established a permanent settlement at Mang'ua in central Njelu around 1887. Although his principal aim was trade, his influence in the spread of Islam generated anxiety among early missionaries (Gallagher 1971:74-75), especially in the Kitanda area of Mshope where he carried out elephant hunting operations and was seen to have caused the conversion of the local sultan, Surinyongo (Doerr 1998:69). In the 1890s, Litunu, a competing Sagara trader arrived, originally from Kilosa, and also introduced Islam as an indirect consequence of trading operations throughout the District (Gallagher 1971:73). Meanwhile, Nkosi Chabruma was developing his own trade links with coastal merchants who visited his capital and employed porters, including local Ndendeuli, who were among the first to convert to Islam after marrying Muslims on the coast (Gallagher 1971:81-82). By the first years of the twentieth century, Islam had established a stronghold in the south of Tanzania, and, as with Christianity, its spread appears to have had accelerated in response to Maji Maji. Several of the sons of Ngoni leaders who had been executed after the rebellion converted to Islam, a development that created further anxiety among missionaries (Doerr 1998:64). In Njelu, Sultan Ali Songea, whose adherents were predominantly Yao, converted to Islam in 1910 (Iliffe 1979:213). Islam was given a considerable boost by the preference of the German administration to employ Muslims in the army, government schools and civil service, and this also applied to Songea to the despair of the Benedictines (Iliffe 1979:214; Doerr 1998:69). In 1912 the Songea District Officer, Freiherr Hugo von Nordeck zur Rabenau, revealed his preference for Islam, declaring: "We do not actually need the mission. Islam is sufficient and it is the best religion for Africans" (Doerr 1998:69). But attitudes were changing and by 1914 recruitment of local Christians to the administration was officially encouraged (Doerr 1998:69-70).

By the early 1920s, Islam was established in a number of places within the District, in particular: Songea town; Rashid's relocated settlement at Kikole in Njelu; a few Yao settlements along the Ruvuma to the south; Likuyu in the east, and Manda on the Lake Shore (TNA/1733/5, SDAR 1920/21, pages 5-6). By 1924 there were eight Muslim schools in the District, and it was clear that the town was developing into an important Islamic centre (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 13). The priest in the new Matagoro Mission near Songea town wrote extensively in the 1930s about the difficulties in protecting his flock from the dangers of Islam. With the early influence of the German administration around the boma, the large proportion of Yao among Sultan Songea's adherents, and its growing role as a centre of commerce, Muslims were in the majority of Muslims by the time of the First World War. By 1939 there were estimated to be 3000 in the town and surrounding areas as opposed to 200 Catholics, 100 Protestants and "perhaps also one or two heathens" (Songea Chronicle 1939:170). While local Christians were predominantly Ngoni, Ndendeuli and Matengo in origin, the town population was a far cry from the ideal of *Volksmission*, or indeed Indirect Rule, and accordingly considered more prone to the dangers of Islam. The priest listed its diverse and disorganised composition:

Europeans, Indians (Goan and Banyani) and Negroes from nearly all directions; from East Africa, Negroes from the coast and people from further inland... even from Uganda and Nubia, and heaven knows where else, and therefore most or all of them are estranged from their tribe and uprooted elements, those who felt that their homeland was too narrow, and partly also failures, good-for-nothings, crooks, and others again who are honest and diligent people (Songea Chronicle 1939:178).

His anxieties about the town were mirrored in the schools of several surrounding villages, "which are completely infested by the Mohamedans who are in the majority" (Songea Chronicle 1939:181).

In eastern Mshope the first stronghold of Islam before the First World War was probably Likuyu (Gallagher 1971:121, 137). The agents from this time were remembered to have been Ngindo, including the government Akida, Rashid Kombo, who administered the area probably from 1921 until his removal in 1930. His appointment encouraged immigration of other Ngindo to the Likuyu area and was considered retrospectively to have been a turning point in the spread of Islam (Gallagher 1971:122). Kombo became a powerful Islamic authority, with his house acting as the local mosque, and people coming from Mgombasi and Kitanda to study under him (Gallagher 1971:129). In 2002 an elder in northern Undendeuli, Mustafa Fukara, recalled the arrival of Islam in his community, Mtimbira, some 50 miles north of Likuyu in what is now the Selous Game Reserve. Before 1920, three local men had

travelled separately to Tanga, Zanzibar and Dar es Salaam as labour migrants. Each “went as a Pagan, and returned as a Muslim”. He described them as normal people, but their status increased greatly on their return: “People respected them very much because they had introduced something they didn’t know – it was fantastic” (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

A second focal point of Islam in the east was Namtumbo, which emerged as the administrative centre of Undendeuli from the 1950s. Oral traditions recorded by Gallagher begin later in the early 1920s with the role of Hassan Mang’unyuka, a returned labour migrant based at nearby Luegu. Mang’unyuka worked in several coastal locations from 1912, adopted Islam in Tabora soon after the War, and began teaching and converting after his return to Luegu in 1923. At first he had difficulty convincing his skeptical neighbours of its value, but built the first mosque and brought the first *tarika*, stimulating its development in other areas including Mchomoro in the late 1930s (Gallagher 1971:137, 146). The first mosque in the Namtumbo area, according to Gallagher’s sources, was established at neighbouring Rwinga in 1936 by Saidi Mwinyingoma, while Amiri Hinduka established another at Namtumbo in 1952 (Gallagher 1971:139). Further east, in Mchomoro, an example of the third category of Islamic agent identified by Gallagher, the Islamic trader Yusufu Stambuli, is remembered to have developed the religion, although it was established in the area before his arrival. He was sent to Mchomoro in 1939 as agent to a Songea based Indian trader to replace an Ndendeuli agent, Saidi Kibaba, and he followed Kibaba’s lead in teaching Islam in his trade catchment area. The following year he started a Koranic School and actively encouraged Islam until the late 1960s, by which time there were three mosques in the Mchomoro area (Gallagher 1971:138-9). Three of these four men – Mang’unyuka, Mwinyingoma and Hinduka – were leaders in the Ndendeuli separatist movement in the 1950s, and it would be tempting to follow Gallagher by concluding that the two movements were thus closely linked. However, one encounters traditions which suggest that the origins of Islam began before the First World War, or even before the advent of colonial rule. According to one source, Namtumbo itself was named after a pre-colonial Muslim trader from Kilwa who settled there and developed an important staging post for coastal trade (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam). Arguably, then, the link made by Gallagher is largely an artefact of a limited range of informants, his methodology (questionnaires filled in by his pupils at Songea School), and a lack of depth in oral traditions. The point is not to discredit Gallagher but to highlight the difficulties inherent in a study of Islamic history on the peripheries of colonial society, and thus reveal something of its character.

We have seen how the establishment and spread of Islam was effected by individual Muslims with a range of experiences and roles as traders, returning labour migrants and

government agents. Their functions as Islamic proselytisers were embedded in their respective economic, social and political roles, each agent establishing a personal network that nurtured these activities as well as the significance of Islam. A revealing quote from the priest of Matagoro Mission shows how Islam was spread during the 1930s through its links with trade networks, and assisted by its non-hierarchical character:

The Mohammedans are quite crafty to win over new converts. They travel around as wandering tradesmen in a white long frock and with a white cap thereby with their audacious manner and their clever talk impress every native who makes much of outer appearances. Everyone feels honoured when such a person offers friendship or even blood brotherhood. The result of all this, then, is lively relationships, visits here and there, the children are being sent to work to a relative in the town, and the beginning of the end is there – strangers are being attracted through the own hospitality of the Muslims, they are being treated well and are being given presents and the trust to the cousin is established. Young boys even are given a woman and when that happens they are lost to us, because all efforts to talk to these people from the side of the teachers and the priest cannot alter anything anymore. Also the orphans of the Christians and heathens who perhaps are distantly related to them and who have never really been cared for, they know how to make them their own and with the sanction of the law, and thereby they too become Muslims (Songea Chronicle 1939:180-1).

Similarly, in the area of Namabengo by 1938, the resident priest wrote with some discomfort of the ease with which Islam was advancing, through networks rather than the centralised structures of the mission, which he linked to the lack of discipline and morality demanded by its agents:

One has to be amazed when one sees with what speed and ease Islam managed to spread, almost without any missionary means. A campaign like ours in the Catholic Church is not necessary for the Muslims to have converts. Every Muslim is a born apostle. At the circumcision it is as if the spirit of the apostle is injected into him often under dreadful curses. The natives fear nothing more than being cursed and these curses turn them into completely fanatical ‘crescent’ worshippers. If only every baptised Christian would be a born apostle! Of course it is easier to be an apostle for an easy pleasant style of living as in the case in the Islamic religion than a pure repentant life as is being demanded by the Catholic religion (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:121-122).

In this sense, Islam was a ‘bottom up’ enterprise in Songea District that was conducive to, and an expression of, an egalitarian network and a non-authoritarian culture. These were conditions that prevailed on the eastern frontiers of Ngoni society among the scattered Ndendeuli and Yao populations of shifting cultivators. The demographically unstable and ‘detrified’ urban population of Songea town, with its links to trade and coastal migration,

also had an elective affinity with the spread of Islam. By contrast, the Benedictine approach to missionary work was conducive to the stable, hierarchical, authoritarian character of Ngoni society, culture and settlement. In later sections we examine how affinities between social organisation, ethnic identity, methods of proselytism, and religious choice give important clues to understanding the interaction between the two religions in Songea District, and the emergence of two divergent historical trajectories in the east and west.

Mission Education and the British Administration, 1922-1957

The attitude of the British Administration in Songea was at best ambivalent and at times highly critical of the impact of the imperfect education offered by mission bush schools on local cultures and the coercive methods that were often employed to establish them in some parts of the District. Part of their response was to establish government schools that were based upon the principle of religious freedom, although in practice they were often still pro-Islamic. At no point did they have anything like the resources of the Benedictines at their disposal, and furthermore there was a general unwillingness among Africans to accept education (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922). By 1921 the government school in Songea had just been established (or re-established), and by 1924 attendance had stabilised with 84 pupils in five classes taught by two African teachers (TNA/1733/5, SDAR 1920/21; TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 11). Although outward relations with the Benedictines were nearly always cordial, the ambivalence of the administration towards the mission was demonstrated clearly in official correspondence:

As experience is gained it becomes more doubtful whether the teaching of a narrow doctrinal Christianity is in the best interest of the race under present conditions. Native dances the chief form of amusement relaxation and exercise are largely prohibited. The result is that health must suffer and possibly harmful indulgences secretly enjoyed. The practice of many native customs, which to the Missionary savour of heathenism but which are rooted in practicable purposes, are forbidden (TNA/1733/16, SDAR 1923, page 49).

Indeed, the District Officer, West, had a clear preference for the British United Mission to Central Africa, headed at that time by one archdeacon and two priests who appeared to take a less radical and more adaptive approach. He wrote:

This Mission appears to argue, and if so very soundly, that the time has not arrived for the abrupt breaking up of ancient law and custom by enforcing the restrictions, restraints and penalties of European marriage law, which cannot be understood and cannot work... The Mission appears to depend upon the

inherent power of the Christian doctrines which it teaches to gradually bring about that state of mind which will eventually cause converts on their own initiative to ask for legislative support of the monogamous marriage which their religion demands (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923, page 48).

By 1922 there were some ten times more Catholics than Protestants in the District (TNA/1733/22, SDAR 1922), and the greatest overlap was on the Lake Shore. Throughout the remainder of colonial rule the Benedictines and UMCA battled over control of the area, and criticism of the Benedictines' coercive methods of proselytisation feature strongly in official correspondence. The commitment of the Benedictines to this struggle partly explains the accusation that they neglected the east of Songea facilitating the advance of Islam. The conflict began in 1922 as soon as the Benedictines were freed from their internment and able to return to the District. The immediate response of the Songea administration was to control the establishment of bush schools by demanding the consent of all parties. The problem was ensuring that the proposal reflected the will of the people rather than just the local headman who was often given gifts to secure his adherence to a particular mission, and "with a shrewdness which loses nothing by its suavity, plays off one mission against the other to his material advantage" (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, pages 13-14). The whole issue was clearly a great inconvenience to the administrators, who struggled against their personal judgements to remain neutral and professional:

The situation therefore briefly is: Ardent adherents of the Roman Mission are touring the district, and even beyond its boundaries, seeking to persuade the people, and their Tribal Authorities, to embrace the religious instruction of the Roman Missions. The people and their chiefs, bewildered and approached by men of their own colour are persuaded and cajoled into demanding 'schools' (TNA/155/7/7, Longland to CS, 4/2/25).

Longland concluded: "I am of the opinion that the detribalised and imperfectly educated native, who at present represents the Catholic Missions as their teacher, is a menace to the administration of the district". He resented the considerable influence the priests had over the population, and the tendency for catechists to assume that the mission was their sole administrative centre:

From my own observation and knowledge I know that on an order from a priest two thousand natives, or even more, will congregate at a station on a given date. I envy the reverend priest the facility with which his orders seem to be carried out. Sultans assure me that disobedience to such orders are punished with spiritual punishments and also with the mundane penalty of having to cut grass, carry stone, bricks, etc, without payment and for the space of a week or more at the station from which the orders are issued. I

have this information on oath from two Sultans (TNA/155/7/7, Longland to CS, 4/2/25).

The Governor's response was that intervention was not justified since there had been no tangible evidence that public order had been endangered (TNA/155/7/7, CS to Longland, 12/3/25). Meanwhile, Longland's subordinate at Lipumba in Umatengo was on the front-line between the warring denominations. He reported on the strength of Benedictines' efforts to convert or influence followers of the UMCA: "there is no doubt a great deal of pressure has been used, which if not an actual illegal nature, anyhow is of such a kind, that if similar methods were used by a recruiter trying to obtain natives for the coast, the said recruiter would be probably ordered to leave the district" (TNA/155/7/7, AO Lipumba to AO Songea, 17/4/25). In Mbongo, near the Ruhuhu, he asked the inhabitants why they preferred a Catholic school to that of the UMCA, and the response from a local pagan revealed the economic incentives underlying religious choice: "If we see that a field has been planted for a long time without producing any harvest, should we then give praise to the soil?" (Doerr 1998:99). One informant in 2001 who grew up in Lituhi highlighted the competing efforts of the two denominations: "they gave out cloth, salt, hoes, and so on. I remember my parents were torn between the two religions because of the attractions" (Paul Mhaiki, 14/8/01, Matagoro). Government control was strengthened further with Indirect Rule, since greater powers were given to the Native Authorities, and by this time some of these were already Christians including Nduna Laurenti Fusi, based near Peramiho, and Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope, both of whom proved to be particularly valuable supporters of the mission. Also Doerr notes that Nkosi Usangila of Njelu was "on the side of the mission, when it came to the question of the erection of schools" (Doerr 1998:96-97). In contrast, the Benedictines' difficulties were heightened on the Lake Shore by Akida Wabu, "who was both an outsider from present-day Malawi and a Muslim [and] was less than sympathetic towards the erection of Catholic schools" (Doerr 1998:99).

By 1950 the struggle continued, and the Catholic missionaries were still regarded with suspicion by the British administration for their zealous efforts, prompting the DC to write: "The Benedictines continue their all out blitz to get the whole education into their hands" (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 7 and 8). The negative comparison with the UMCA was sustained along with an ambivalence to mission work in general:

The Benedictine Missions with their impressive Headquarters at Peramiho remain the biggest influence in the District. They are a most militant order and maintain a very strong hold on their people though it is questionable whether some of their energies might not be better directed. The UMCA on Lake Nyasa are still short of funds and staff but hope shortly to open a new

Tanganyika Diocese. Their approach to Missionary work is far more liberal than that of the Benedictines. During the year an inquiry was received from another mission asking if there was scope to open in this District. The inquirer was informed that this was probably the most heavily missionised area in the Territory (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, pages 7-8).

The administration was particularly irritated by the Benedictines' apparent disregard for the rules. Not only was the right to open bush schools being "very much abused", they were teaching up to Standard III in non-registered schools with unqualified teachers. In retrospect, it is likely that the administration resented the Benedictines' success to the point of jealousy (Lambert Doerr, 1/8/01, Peramiho). Not only were there many more Catholic schools than government schools, but examination results for the latter were disappointingly poor (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954, page 14).

Efforts to redress the balance forged ahead after the Second World War. By 1951 the Government had established nine dispensaries at Native Authorities throughout the District, providing mainly for malaria, ulcers and first aid.²¹ But the Peramiho hospital and nearby leprosarium had some of the very best facilities in the country, and had begun to attract immigrants including Muslims who established communities in the heart of Christian Njelu over coming decades (see Chapter Six). And in education it would prove impossible to compete. By 1957 there was only one secondary school in Songea that was run by the Government. However, the Benedictines ran a teacher training centre in Peramiho. There were nine middle schools for boys, of which only two were run by Native Authorities (Luhira and Mbamba Bay) while six were run by the Benedictines (Litembo, Mango, Mbinga, Mtyangimbole, Peramiho) and another run by UMCA at Liuli. There were four middle schools for girls, of which none were run by Native Authorities; two were run by Benedictines and two by UMCA. Significantly, not one middle school had been established in Undendeuli. There were 108 primary schools of which one was run directly by the Government in Songea and a further ten by Native Authorities (Kikole, Likuyu, Lusewa, Luwegu, Mchomoro, Mgombasi, Mkongo, Mpigamiti, Msamara, Namtumbo). The Benedictines ran a total of 77 and 20 were run by UMCA (TNA/155/E1/1, School, Class, Staff, Accommodation and Inspection State, Songea District, 1956/7). Needless to say, educational opportunities in the east of Songea were severely lacking in comparison with the west, and indeed the rest of the country.²²

²¹ The dispensaries were located at: Mkwera, Ndirima, Mitomoni, Namtumbo, Gumbiro, Myangayanga, Ngumbo, Likuyu, Lusewa (TNA/155/Last Box/1940-49 Annual Reports, Medical Annual Report, Songea 1951).

²² In the same year, comparative figures of schools in each of the eight districts of Southern Province showed how Songea was comfortably in the lead for all categories of schools with the exception of secondary schools and teacher training colleges for which Masasi District had an extra one of each due

Christianity and Islam on the Eastern Frontier

Neglect of Undendeuli or Ndendeuli Resistance?

As Doerr points out, by the 1950s, the success story of the Benedictines in Songea District was marred by one “glaring exception”. The east of Songea, much of which was to become Undendeuli in 1953, was ‘lost’ to Islam by the late 1920s and thus effectively closed to further Christian evangelism (Doerr 1998:118). Perhaps most significantly, Kitanda Mission in north-east Mshope was not occupied until 1954, just after the retirement of Abbot Gallus, who, despite promises on successive visits, repeatedly delayed its establishment on the grounds of lack of resources. He has been criticised since, as Doerr explains, with the argument that he “wrongly saw the main adversary in the Anglican mission and therefore invested too much effort and personnel on the lake shore. An apocryphal story even has a missionary praying for the arrival of the Anglicans in Undendeule, as this would have brought about a change in Abbot Gallus’ attitude” (Doerr 1998:119).

To understand the significance of Ndendeuli resistance to Christianity on the frontier we need to gauge the validity of this criticism. The conflict between the Benedictines and Protestants on the Lake Shore was certainly demanding of resources, but arguably its significance is exaggerated by its requirement for government intervention which gave it a higher profile among contemporary Europeans as well as leaving an official record for historians to uncover. By contrast, conflicts between agents of Christianity and agents of Islam in the east of Songea were hidden from official sight and mind, at least until the rise of Ndendeuli nationalism. In fact, Doerr does not find evidence to suggest that Abbot-Bishop Gallus perceived the Anglicans in the west as any greater a threat than Islam in the east. Although Gallus was not “ecumenically minded” he was also not “anything like a great missionary strategist”. In fact he was “not a man of great vision”, and concerned himself primarily with practical issues such as mission construction. It seems unlikely that he consciously chose to favour the west. If blame is to be placed upon individual missionaries, suggests Doerr, it might better be directed towards the priest responsible for Mahanje from 1926 to 1939, and perhaps towards Gallus for failing to transfer him in favour of one with greater initiative and vitality (Doerr 1998:119-20).

to the intensive efforts, coincidentally, of both the Benedictines and UMCA operating under different jurisdictions from those in Songea (TNA/155/E1/1, Education Facilities in the Southern Province.

Up to this point, all representations of religious belief and practice in Songea have regarded Africans as equal and passive recipients, with the key factor being the effort expended by their respective proselytising agents. Doerr is the first to go further by tentatively suggesting that ethnic politics may also have played a role in religious choice. With reference to the growing Ndendeuli nationalism during British rule and Nkosi Mbonani's staunch support for the mission, he asks: "Could not their turning to Islam be seen as a form of protest against this?" (Doerr 1998:120).

Despite the wealth of material from government, missionary, and scholarly sources on religion in Songea there are remarkably few voices from Africans themselves. Historical understandings of senior Africans involved in public affairs in the District reflect the 'official' history outlined above and fail to suggest any political or cultural factors that might have influenced religious choice. Thus, a retired Foreign Ambassador from Lituhi on the Lake Shore stressed the significance of the interdenominational struggle in diverting resources away from Undendeuli. He underlined the point by saying: "If they had used the same force in Undendeuli, Christianity would have spread there just as much as in the Ungoni area" (Paul Mhaiki, 14/8/01, Matagoro). In a sense, this is the 'null hypothesis' to be tested alongside the possibility of a political and cultural explanation. Similarly, the current MP for Undendeuli, Professor Mbawala, who grew up in Namabengo, also stressed the neglect of Undendeuli, not only by missionaries but the Europeans and colonial Ngoni rulers under them: "The Benedictine Fathers promoted Islam – by default". He told of how Abbot Gallus had actually said "Islam is not a threat, to people, but Protestantism is!" And thus resources were directed at the Lake Shore. He rejected the suggestion that rising Ndendeuli nationalism may have played a part, and he chose to highlight the good relations between the mission and the community in Namabengo during his youth. The African catechist and German priest, Vincence, were both very popular and both learnt fluent Kindendeuli: "So it was not true that there was such animosity. After all, the [true] Ngonis were so few – just the chiefs and sub-chiefs" (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam).

Mbawala described more mundane reasons for conversion to Islam: "Originally all these people were going to the coast – trading, once a year, to buy salt and sell ivory and honey. They came back with salt and cloth. They came into contact with Islam, and Muslims would come to Undendeuli". He stressed that Islam in Songea District was not devout, with only loose connections with the religion and its pure expression on the coast. "They liked the rule about taking many wives!" I asked whether people like Sultan Songea converted to Islam so that they would have better links with traders on the coast, but he denied this suggestion:

Analysis by Agencies and Districts. Attached to: PEO to all DCs etc., Education Facilities in the

“They were very prominent anyway. Songea didn’t need Islam”. But by becoming a Muslim you joined a brotherhood that had links to the coast:

Islam was like a fashion. To be a Muslim meant to be enlightened – to show that you were a man of the times. People would say ‘Huyu ni Mungwana’ – the word is associated with being enlightened, civilised, gentile, civilised... he knows a lot of things – has been to madarassa. But that [education] was totally irrelevant compared to what we have today – saying passages like a parrot! But it was prestigious (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam).

Oral histories recorded from the village level in present-day Undendeuli were often very different from the depoliticised accounts given by Songea’s public figures. One of the most persuasive accounts of local relations between Islam and Christianity was given by Amiri Hinduka, a *mwaliimu* of great age, who stated without hesitation or prompting that Islam in the Luegu and Namtumbo areas was adopted by the Ndendeuli population as a reaction against Ngoni-sponsored Christianity:

Concerning the advent of Islam – when the missionaries came they based themselves in the Ngoni areas and established themselves better there. When they tried to introduce schools in Undendeuli – because they were using Ngoni’s to do it – people rejected it – because the system was to force people to go to school. We thought it was a way to force people to go to school and thus also become a Christian. Bush schools were started around here – I was made to go, but I ran away! I ran away from the school! Even the Ngoni at that time were pagans, as well as the Ndendeuli. But we didn’t want to be forced by people who were friends of the Ngoni. It was a resistance by the Ndendeuli against a new domination. Therefore we preferred to remain pagans. But at that time there was also a strong Arab influence from Kilwa especially and later from Lindi. Arab traders recruited Africans into their trading systems and when they came this way they brought their attitudes and their religion. *They* never forced us to be Muslims – they persuaded us – and we thought that they were better. One Ndendeuli after another, who had made contact with these people, became Muslims. Then there was a move by many Ndendeuli, because of the main trading route here, to go to Lindi and Kilwa, and when they wanted to come back they brought more good news about Islam. That is why the Ndendeuli in big numbers are Muslims today, and why there is a minority of Christians here, and why in Ungoni there are few Muslims but many Christians (Amiri Hinduka, 28/7/01, Suluti).

When asked whether the missionaries had made a genuine effort in his area, his reply again confirmed the importance of resistance to ethnic domination: “They tried hard but it was difficult for them because they were accompanied by our enemies the Ngoni”. And he clarified a further point: “The feeling against the Ngoni was there before the introduction of

any religion, because the Ngoni betrayed their hosts – they came as friends but ended up as rulers” (Amiri Hinduka, 28/7/01, Suluti). As mentioned above, Hinduka was one of the half a dozen Ndendeuli separatist leaders in the 1950s and his words reveal particular resentment towards Ngoni domination. However, without prompting, other elderly informants who were born before the establishment of Islam and Christianity mentioned Ndendeuli resistance at some point in the discussion. A son of the colonial jumble in Msindo, near Namabengo, said: “They didn’t want to study – the Wandendeuli! They didn’t want education because they thought it would bring Christianity”. He argued that it was only during the 1960s that the Catholic Church was finally able to penetrate Undendeuli. Furthermore, only after TANU had taken hold did attitudes among Ndendeuli improve to education in general since it had been seen as synonymous with Christianity and Ngoni domination (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo). Similar views were given by others of his generation, even among Peramiho residents (Cassian Njunde, 6/8/01, Peramiho).

Mustafa Fukara recalled how Islam had been quite easy to introduce during the 1920s in Mtimbira in the far north of Undendeuli, except amongst the elders who did not want to be converted: “Even my father refused and died a pagan; but the youth liked it”. I asked why, and his answer echoed Mbawala quoted above by locating religious choice within the everyday concerns of local youth rather than struggles over power and ideology that were to feature in coming decades:

First of all they were very neat, and up-to-date, wearing long white clothes and white caps – so it was the attraction of this – the appearance. Also, secondly, the Muslims were rejecting witchcraft – that’s why they liked it... When the Muslims came, they didn’t like bad traditional customs such as witchcraft, or to be dirty and other traditional things which were not developed, they understood that this religion can put their lives in good order (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

After the entire population of Mtimbira had been resettled by the Government at Nambecha, and Ndendeuli nationalism was approaching its peak, the Benedictines attempted to introduce Christianity to Nambecha and neighbouring Mgombasi. The response was unequivocal:

They refused. In Mgombasi between 1951 and 1953 they rejected Christianity – the whole of Mgombasi. But there were bush schools all over the place. [He lists the names of places]. I went to bush school in 1948. Many Ndendeuli were in these bush schools – but when they were called for baptism they refused. Even myself I refused to be baptised. I wanted to go to school in Mahanje – but I refused because I would have been baptised there. My father was related to Mbonani – he was married to Saidi Palangu’s daughter. So because of this relationship it meant that I could go to school in

Mahanje – but I refused because I would have to be baptised (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

I assumed that he must have been a Muslim by then, but was surprised to learn that he had been “merely pagan”. Of the 15 to 20 pupils in his village school in Mtimbira around 1937 only three were baptised. “Also they were selling religion. Those who were baptised were given clothes – white cloth called ‘Japan’ clothes – But we still refused.” After a few moments pause he replied with this unprompted explanation:

Even myself I don’t know why. [...] We distrusted Christianity because approximately all the Ngoni were Christians, and the Ngoni were enemies of the Ndendeuli so we could not follow Christianity, because of that... They wanted to make us Christians... So we didn’t like that. We thought the cruelty done by the Ngoni was coming from Christianity. It makes cruelty we thought. That’s why we disliked Christianity (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

Throughout this explanation there was a sense that he had not consciously thought of this explanation when he was young, but could articulate it now. Another participant in the discussion exclaimed: “Ah! Now we are getting an answer” (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

Establishment of Kitanda Mission, 1908-1955

Throughout the colonial period Kitanda was seen as a strategic outpost of Benedictine Ungoni preventing the advance of Islam from the east. According to the Kitanda Chronicle written by the resident priest in 1955, Islam was totally unknown in the area until 1913 when Mzurinjonga, one of the two appointed sultans after the Maji Maji uprising, allowed himself to be circumcised with five others from his area by Islamic friends in Songea town including Rashidi bin Masudi. In 1908 the first African catechists were posted from Peramiho to Kitanda to initiate a Christian community. At the start of the First World War there were five schools in the area (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:226). Therefore the establishment of Islam in Kitanda took place alongside Christianity, suggesting that their respective agents were in competition from the very beginning. Furthermore Christianity was linked to Ngoni identity. Another agent was Mhammadi Matumbi, who was born in Gumbiro, the headquarters of Mshope, but converted to Islam while working as a servant to a Muslim in Matumbi during the aftermath of Maji Maji. Like Mang’unyuka in Luegu, Matumbi settled in Kitanda in 1926, built a mosque and taught the Koran. In the same year the Benedictines established a mission at Mahanje in northern Mshope, four days walk away, and the new priest had just resumed

work in Kitanda after a twelve year absence. He visited the local jumbe, Mkwenjere, to persuade him to put a stop to Mhammedi's activities. But his efforts failed, and consequently the priest changed the name of the bush school from Mkwenjere to Lugongoro. This act is very revealing. The priest was trying to undermine an officially recognised jumbe and reduce his legitimacy in the community, but the attempt backfired: "under his influence not only heathens but also baptised men had themselves circumcised". A circumciser visited annually, and gradually, "nearly the whole village became Islamic" (Kitanda Chronicle, 1955:225).

In 1927 a site for a mission was identified in Kitanda, but in the following year Nduna Palangu transferred from Kitanda to Mbunga some ten miles to the south taking almost the entire local population with him. Apart from revealing the extraordinary degree of mobility of these frontier communities, his move begs the question whether this was in part a response to the proposed invasion. Palangu was a member of the ruling Mshope family and followed his father's footsteps in a 70-year history of antagonism with successive Mshope nkosis. His conversion to Islam and subsequent rejection of 'true' Ngoni status in favour of Ndendeuli identity in support of their separatist movement suggest at least passive resistance to the mission. Either way, a new site was selected and a church established in 1936, but the site was to remain unoccupied for nearly 20 years. In this decade only 150 Christians were baptised in addition to the existing 50 who (presumably) had originated in Peramiho (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:226-7). Thus, by the mid-1930s ethnic difference was being reduced among the Christian population, yet religion was increasingly divisive.

In 1946 Nkosi Mbonani announced that all children must attend school in his chiefdom. It was a mixed blessing for the Benedictines in Mahanje and Kitanda. On the positive side, even the Muslim children were required to attend school who previously had been prevented from doing so by their parents, and as a result they could open a school in Kipiki about one and a half hours walk away from the mission. Previous attempts to open a catechism centre there had driven several Muslim families to move away rather than have their children attend the school. The numerous small acts of resistance of this kind reveal the extent of disquiet over a growing Christian presence. Mbonani's decree even forced children from the Islamic Mkwenjere village to attend the school, and this revealed its disadvantage since the newcomers failed to take part in the religious classes, and soon their example was followed by all other Muslim and heathen children who had previously attended them. There was understandable resentment among existing Islamic families that exposure to Christianity was being forced upon their children. The priest wrote, acknowledging a link to Ndendeuli nationalism: "Therefore they started to make trouble against the Christian King and the mission" (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:228).

From the early 1940s every time the Bishop visited Kitanda he was requested, apparently by Christians, heathens and Muslims alike, to fill the post of priest and establish a mission. But each time they were told to wait because of personnel shortages, and new recruits from Europe were posted elsewhere in Songea (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:231). Nkosi Mbonani was particularly persuasive and “asked the honourable Bishop earnestly to save what can be saved by occupying Kitanda Mission in this religious and politically endangered area”. But by this time the Bishop was due to retire and chose to leave the matter to his successor (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:232). Finally the mission was established in April 1955 (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:232). The impossible notion that establishment of a mosque might have required a similar delay of 40 years until a higher authority gave permission underlines the fundamental differences in structure of Islam and Christianity in the District.

The Battle over Mgombasi School, 1951-1955

An extreme example of the “trouble against the Christian King and the mission” was the struggle over control of Mgombasi school. “To liven up the mainly Islamic schools of the Mgombasi area”, recalled the priest of the new Kitanda mission in 1955, “we tried to acquire a government recognised primary school”, a proposal that was supported by Nkosi Mbonani. While some resident Muslims had preferred a “pure government school not led by the mission”, they reluctantly agreed since no government teachers were available. After some delays the school was eventually completed in October 1951 partly through unpaid community labour. However, resistance quickly emerged and some “fanatics” demanded an end to Christian religious education. “They wanted only *Madarasa* – lessons in the Koran – and secular subjects to be taught”. Since the law was on their side, the Benedictine teacher continued as before, while the Muslims were told to complement Christian teachings by arranging for their own *Madarasa*. Tellingly, this suggestion was rejected and they turned to the DC for support (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:228-9).

In September 1952, Nkosi Mbonani was requested by the DC to hold a meeting in Mgombasi in order to resolve this conflict by advising the Muslims once again that they should make their own arrangements for Islamic education (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:229-230). But their main spokesman replied: “we are not agreeing to any of these proposals. We only have one demand: we do not want to have anything to do with the mission school, we only want a government school. If we don’t get this all the Muslims are going to take their children out of the school”. Mbonani refused to back down. The outcome was that over the following two weeks more than half the pupils left the school. Fifty pupils remained of which most were Muslims “who did not let themselves be frightened by these loud-mouths”

(Kitanda Chronicle 1955:230). Unsatisfied that some remained, four of the more vociferous Muslims confronted the teacher again before collecting together the remaining Muslim children and instructing them in the school yard. This expression of protest was repeated intermittently over the coming weeks. During this time Nkosi Mbonani died, and the movement for Ndendeuli self-rule came into the open providing a framework in which to express these grievances. Yet the battle still needed to be resolved. By the end of 1952 only 15 pupils remained, and even the teacher failed to turn up for fear of being poisoned. The matter was resolved in 1954 with the arrival of a government teacher, ironically a Protestant from the Lake Shore because a Muslim teacher could not be found, and as far as the priest was concerned this was a victory for the Muslims. The mission transferred its attention from Mgombasi to Kitanda where already half the population were Muslims although seen to be less fanatical. None of this would not have happened, despaired the priest, if only the mission had won over the majority of heathens 25 years ago (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:231).

Christianity and Islam in Ligera, 1923 to 1953

Ligera lies on eastern frontier of Njelu, to the south of present-day Undendeuli. The area covered by the mission was vast, with a sparse and uneven population of multiple origins and ethnicities, and a long history of in- and out-migration. The late pre-colonial population comprised settlements of Yao and Nindi, and until the First World War the majority were heathens while some of the elder Yao had even attended UMCA schools. According to the resident priest in 1950, their conversion to Islam was driven from the south: “The warrior-like Wahyao sultans on the other side of the Rovuma, who often fought each other with their muzzle-loaders, were fanatical Islamic adherents and gradually pulled their people into the religion of the half moon” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:229). In the decades following the demographic upheaval of Maji Maji, Pangwa and Matengo moved into the area, originally from Matimira and Mpitimbi in south-central Njelu, who had spent two decades as refugees in Portuguese East Africa. Later, in 1937, 1938 and 1941, “whole caravans of the Wahyao with their chief Kwizombe returned to their land” in the Ligera area, causing greater anxiety among the missionaries who had just established their new mission.

The complex relationships between ethnicity, origin, length of residence, and religious choice were a matter of great interest to the resident priest who devoted much space in his chronicles to understanding and simplifying the links within the tribal world view of his time. One relationship was clear – for the mission the Yao were a dangerous force in the spread of Islam. By 1950, we are told that there were between 9000 and 10,000 Yao, in three areas, nearly all of whom were Muslims, and 6000 Ngoni of whom nearly 1300 were

Christians, more than 2000 heathens and the same number were Muslims (Ligera Chronicle 1950:225). Meanwhile, the priest attributed the origins of Christianity to a former local headman, Msawa, deposed by the British, who “had the courage to be the first one of the Ligera – and Mkongo inhabitants to ask for the opening of a school”, and succeeded in 1923. The number of schools increased rapidly from the mid-1920s, administered from 1928 by the newly established Matimira Mission. Importantly, the priest noted that, “By this time Islamic influence was not yet too strong, but to the east in Tunduru there was much obstruction by agents of Islam” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:230-1).

Examples of the divisive character of religious choice fill the Ligera Chronicles from the late 1920s. In 1932 the Yao Jumbe, Alifa, asked the priest of Matimira for a school in his settlement. However, his elders refused “because they did not want to have anything to do with Christianity. Two attempts were made to send a teacher there but as soon as he started to speak of religion or prayed, the children left”. In 1944 the priest of Ligera instigated the mission’s most significant attempt to convert them. He wrote: “After many attempts to win the Wahyao over one by one we asked ourselves: if the important men, namely the Chiefs Alifa and Kwizombe, could be persuaded to join us, then we shall have won”. Thus, at an open discussion the priest tentatively requested Kwizombe to “protect the religious freedom of those inclined towards Christianity” in situations where there was a dispute between Christianity and Islam. This was accepted, but, much to the priest’s frustration, permission was not granted to allow the mission schools to give religious education (Ligera Chronicle 1950:238).

Curiously, Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope had some influence here, although it was officially part of Njelu. He visited Ligera in 1949 and requested all Muslims that their children without exception should attend school or be reported to him. But despite great efforts by the mission to carry out this order, they completely failed to increase attendance. The children who had been won over already were either sent to a distant government school or taken away to live with distant relatives. Furthermore, “Where we started up schools in the Islamic area the children ran away at the first mention of religion or prayer. So it was worthless to squander the precious alms” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:243). In 1949, both Yao leaders agreed to the establishment of a school among their respective Yao populations. However, the promising start instantly collapsed around the issue of “customary puberty celebration”. The priest recalled: “At this question the mistrust of the entire elder generation came to the fore for whom the tribal customs mattered more than the Christian belief”. Alifa refused to sign the application for his school, and Kwizombe’s school failed to develop because of his “underhandedness” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:238).

By 1950 the priest concluded how the Islam problem was getting increasingly complicated: “To be sure Islam is on the defensive yet the offensive of the Christians is not intensive enough” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:243). And by 1951 conflicts had begun to get violent. “In Liwawa”, the priest recalled, “at an outpost school near the Rovuma a school box was broken open and books stolen and torn up, the cross was hacked into pieces with an axe and the banana plants around the school cut down. There was nothing one could do. Nevertheless after threat from us some of the school materials were laid on the road at night and others were found on the nearby field” (Ligera Chronicle 1954:347-8). One evening in 1953, the senior teacher of this same school passed near the site where local Islamic circumcision ceremonies were performed. The priest wrote: “They knocked him over and almost throttled him. A strong young man was just able to save him. Then the Muslims wanted to attack those [pupils] who were on their way home. As this was not successful they stole the whole school trunk. But also because there were no witnesses to the latter deed the perpetrators had nothing to fear” (Ligera Chronicle 1954:348).

The Naming of Namabengo, 1934

Namabengo Mission was established in 1934, about 22 miles from Songea town on the main road to Lindi. It was the most easterly station until the establishment of Ligera in 1938. However, mission work began in the area a couple of years before the First World War (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:119). Namabengo was the first wife of the powerful Ngoni ruler Vingilako and she succeeded him after his death until abdicating around 1905. By the late 1930s she was still remembered for the tight control she held over her people. With no male descendent, her daughter succeeded her after Maji Maji until she was deposed by the British in 1920. According to the resident priest, she retired to a simple life 20 minutes from the mission station and retained much respect as well as good relations with the mission, visiting once a month. Unfortunately for the mission she was a Muslim, and her half brother, Mkangasimba, was the local Jumbe by that time (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:118). Before the priest could commence work in the area around 1911 he had to take “incisive action” to get permission for a school from Sultan Namabengo because she was held in such great esteem (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:119-120). He was successful and six schools were established in the area before the First World War. With the War, little progress was made until after 1922. When the mission was established in 1934 it was named Namabengo, although the area was previously referred to by the local name Libobi and this had been the name given to the new church in 1924, “but this change did not happen without some trouble”, recalled the Namabengo priest. It was an example of how the Benedictines often

chose to ally with the Ngoni elite by favouring Ngoni names for their new stations, outposts and schools, which in turn were then formalised by the British administration. In an area of contested political authority on the edge of Ngoni society, these choices were so politically charged that Ndendeuli elders refused to visit the mission:

The village Chief (Jumbe), a pure race Ndendeule who lives near the mission called all his people together one day and protested solemnly against the name Namabengo but too late because the name for the new station had already been granted by the British Government. One can understand their protest if one considers that the new station lies in an area which is mainly populated by the Wandendeule (pronounced Wandende-ule), yet the Namabengo are from the Wangoni tribe who enslaved the Wandendeule. That is why the said village elder and many of his old people are seldom seen on the station, an indication that they are still cross (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:119).

The priest added, demonstrating unquestioned acceptance of an Ngoni elite version of history: “On the other hand the Wandendeule do not deserve to have a different name for the station which tallies with their language, for two-thirds of all Christians are Wandonde which means People of the Namabengo” (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:119). Whether or not they deserved their old name, this attitude will have fuelled Ndendeuli resistance in the area. The present-day MP for Undendeuli, who was born and raised in Namabengo, confirmed resistance to the change of name: “The name Namabengo was imposed on that village” he explained, “the real local name is Liboli”. A trader from Mtwara, possibly a Muslim judging by his name, Yusuf, named the Namabengo area Liboli [not Libobi] after the name of a river near Mtwara. “The missionaries take the name of a prominent person when they named a place”, explained my informant, “and the local people often didn’t like it at all” (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam).²³

Ethnicity and Religious Choice

Ethnicity, Settlement and Morality in Ligera

We have already examined some remarks by the priest in Ligera on the relationship between ethnicity and religious choice. Much space in the chronicles is devoted to this theme, which

²³ The Ndendeuli in this area were asserting their ethnic identity in the late 1930s through sustaining their traditional ‘tribal dance’ (*Ngoma*), in their case called *Lipuga*. The priest noted: “They also dance the magwamba dance of the Wangoni a lot but take great trouble not to allow their own Lipuga dance to die out” (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:75).

gives insights into the character of these frontier populations as well as their representation by late-colonial missionaries. Just as the ethnic stereotypes used by agricultural officials reflected their respective contributions to the colonial economy, for the Ligera priest these judgements of tribal character were remarkably similar to perceptions of their respective willingness to adopt Christianity, as described elsewhere in the same Chronicle. Thus, his positive assessment of the Pangwa and Matengo is consistent with his description elsewhere of how they had arrived together via Portuguese East Africa in the mid-1920s and had been relatively receptive to Christianity, and in particular the Pangwa groups near Ligera who “were the first to accept mission schools”. His ambivalent attitude towards the Ndendeuli corresponds with his description elsewhere that they were “an old-established group who resisted Christianity for a long time but are now firm believers, as firm as those who have subscribed to Islam”. And his damning criticism of the Nindi corresponds with his description elsewhere of their shared history with the Yao. Both had proved particularly difficult to convert, while the Nindi: “always resisted Christianity and largely went over to Islam” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:225-7). Apart from revealing the criteria by which missionaries made judgements and represented ethnic groups, as a tentative hypothesis it appears that resistance to Christianity was partly a function of period of residency in the area.

Despite their dangerous religious influence, Yao character came off well in his estimations, with their compact, organised settlements, diligent agriculture, and avoidance of alcohol. He wrote: “The Wahyao are open, full of servile friendliness and humility. They seek to make the best impression on strangers, make much of honour, but on the other hand they despise all those who think differently. They have their own customs which together with their religious views they stick to with apprehensive conscientiousness” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:227). His main criticism was the “greediness and ambition” of their leaders, resulting in unpleasant fights and injustices, and seen to be directly caused by their custom of “mother privileges” or matrilineality (Ligera Chronicle 1950:227). By contrast, the priest wrote, “The main shortcoming of the Wangoni is their unheard of addiction to drink when there is a good harvest and their unstable and eccentric behaviour which shows in their moving apart and away”, adding in parentheses, “The greatest enemy of progress is the envy of the lazy” (Ligera Chronicle 1950:227). Bearing in mind that the category ‘Ngoni’ was understood to be a polyglot mixture of ethnicities and origins, it is relevant to note how Ngoni was synonymous with laziness and alcoholism even on the furthest frontier of Ngoni society. More importantly, however, was the very different tendency of Yao and Ngoni to be settled in one place, because this was linked to social organisation and had important consequences for missionary work.

Between the Pangwa and Nindi there was a range of responses to the mission: "Other Ligera groups vacillate for a long time between the Islamic and the Christian faiths. The result is that one doesn't dare to baptise any of these people, because there is no enthusiasm to be found" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228). The cause was seen to be a combination of lack of effort on the part of catechists, but also, revealingly, a lack of political control in this neglected periphery of the Colonial State which was explicitly seen as a prerequisite for a thriving Christian community:

These conditions are also due to the lack of a local authority figure. There does not exist in the whole of the Ligera area a single District Officer in any village but only small overseers who often live far away from their dispersed flock who are not well regarded by them. So many people in Ligera are not afraid of the Government, which makes it impossible to have a thriving Christian community (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228).

The problem was common to the whole Ligera region. Local inhabitants were clearly seen to be on the fringes of discipline and morality: "The people here have had so little contact with religion and government that they feel free and independent in everything. They pay their headtax by the skin of their teeth but if there were some other unpleasant incident they'd be prepared straight away to move to their Portuguese place of refuge" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:227). The problem was greatest in the Ruvuma area, five or six days walk from the nearest nduna: "There the natives are used to complete freedom. [...] The little reading and writing and whatever else the children learn at the school has little worth in the eyes of the people of the wilderness" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228-9). In summary the priest wrote that the main difficulties to convert the Ligera population to Christianity were, "firstly the dispersed settlements of the Wangoni; secondly the influence of the Islamic religion, thirdly the lack of restraint in everything" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:229). Each of these was a reflection of the frontier character of the Ligera region.

The biggest problem was Islam. Further north in Undendeuli Islam had been "spread from the coast and promoted by some pushy individuals and travelling tradesmen" but in the Ligera area blame rested firmly on the Yao: "it was the Wahyao and their influence which dragged many tribes into Islam". Much was written on how Yao social organisation was seen to be uncondusive to Christian conversion:

... the Wahyao have extensive families which easily make up a whole village. And because big families result in the formation of new relations, in the end the whole tribe is related to each other, especially the more important people in it. This contributes much to its unity and cooperation but is the biggest obstacle towards the conversion of the Wahyao to Christianity. Yet

with God's help a mass conversion can happen if just one respected family elder can be converted (Ligera Chronicle 1950:227).

Later, the link between Islam, matrilineality, morality, and erosion of neighbouring cultures was made:

Islam and matrilineality are wonderfully suited to each other so that one can hardly imagine one without the other. And so the development unfolds: the tribes that adhere to matrilineality follow the Wahyao without difficulty and with it Islam. And one can say: nearly all the Wangoni of the Rovuma area fall for the convenient idea of matrilineality. They say to themselves, instead of properly marrying off my daughters, I can give them to a man without payment so that the man has to be my workslave and their children belong to me then I shall certainly be better off, because I shall have a big village and can give orders as I like and hardly need to work anymore (Ligera Chronicle 1950:229).

Even in predominantly non-Yao areas, contact with Yao was seen as a dangerous influence. In the immediate area of Ligera mission there was a "considerable mixture of tribes" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228). A group of Nindi living south of the mission near to a "strong group" of Yao had "soon caused the closure of the whole school after it first blossomed towards Christianity by becoming Muslims or remaining completely indifferent" (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228). The reasons were diagnosed as:

Mainly the antipathy of the older generation; then the life-long habits that ran completely counter to Christianity, gambling, dancing, alcoholism, and impure behaviour, ruined the unstable Christian youth. [...] In addition there was the bragging and sensual way of life of the Wahyao youth nearby with their many Unyago night celebrations (Ligera Chronicle 1950:228).

Unraveling the complex interaction between religious choice, politics of identity, and missionary constructions of ethnicity is not easy. Of importance here are the prominent links between those factors which are a consequence of location of a community on the frontier of Ngoni society – social and spatial organisation, morality and political authority.

Ndendeuli Settlement Patterns and Namabengo Mission

As in Ligera, religious choice in Namabengo was seen to be linked to the inherent character of different tribes, their morality and discipline. Thus, in 1938 we learn that: "The Wandendeule have a high opinion of themselves and cannot bear to be looked down upon by the Europeans. All in all they lead quite an easygoing and agreeable life. Therefore quite a

few of them fall into the arms of Islam” (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:125). Importantly, it was the system of village elders with no strong hierarchical stable social organisation, and therefore also less moral discipline, that was seen to be holding back mission work among the Ndendeuli. As a result, the population failed to live in large villages, reasoned the priest, since “a small disagreement is enough for the whole family to move into the bush, sometimes only part of that family, and the eldest of that family then becomes the village elder. The priest has no option but to start a school for those few children who moved into the bush”. For example, a large school was operating in Msindo with over 100 children, but within the space of a few years the school was forced to split into five smaller ones. “If one does not follow them many of these children are lost to us”, the priest wrote. Instead of just two teachers, six were required for the same number of children. The 46 schools under Namabengo mission had 900 children, and thus the average number per school was around 20 due to this dispersed, disorganised and mobile settlement pattern (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:125).

In 1945 the link between dispersed settlement, morality and religious choice was reiterated: “Their easy-going lifestyle appeals to the traditional heathen conception”, wrote the priest (Namabengo Chronicle 1954:38). Even in the area immediately surrounding the mission there was a problem with dispersed population, which was dwelled upon at length:

The people here are strongly inclined to be nomads. If they don’t like the old settlement they just leave and look for a new place and new fields. So the school too has to be moved to fulfil its duty. The movement from one place to another is not the worst thing if only they would all move to one certain place. But some move further into the bush, some here, some there, as there still are unlimited possibilities for sowing and planting the fields. To establish a school for each family is a luxury that the missionary cannot afford. On the other hand some children have no opportunity to go to a school because they live too far away. To persuade the parents especially since they are still heathens not to move too far into the bush usually has little effect for they are looking forward to the chance of new fertile fields and that is enough for them (Namabengo Chronicle 1954:39-40).

With the establishment of the tobacco industry by the late 1930s it was clear in Namabengo as well that it was the Ndendeuli in the east of the District who were cultivating the greatest quantities, and stereotypes about Ngoni laziness and Ndendeuli industriousness were reinforced. Tobacco production was seen as a danger to Christianity. On the one hand, fewer travelled to the coast and were thus saved from the risk of contact with Islam, but on the other hand, the increased revenues were seen as directly linked to polygamy: “What do they do with all that money?” asked the priest, “Some get a second wife”. Although the link was not explicitly made, Ndendeuli tobacco growers might understandably have chosen Islam over Christianity since polygamy was endorsed by Islam (see Chapter Five). Tobacco production

was also substantially reducing the workforce at the mission even by the late 1930s. Construction of a new church in 1937 required some 300 labourers, but on average they would manage to muster up between 50 and 60. The problem was felt throughout eastern Ungoni. However, the missionaries saw a more sinister side to this trend than just economics: “This shortage of labour was due to the introduction of the tobacco cultivation during the last few years, and the spread of certain ideas among the natives which ran: Africa for the Africans” (Namabengo Chronicle 1938:124). Thus, by as early as 1938, religious choice in Namabengo was seen to be linked to the rise of Islam, ethnic nationalism with racial undercurrents, economic self-reliance, incidence of polygamy, and commitment to political independence through dispersed settlement patterns and an egalitarian network social organisation.

Culture and Religion in Mtyangimbole

Mission work in the Mtyangimbole area, three hours walk west of Gumbiro (the headquarters of Nkosi Mbonani) began during the First World War. As elsewhere in the east, however, progress was slow until the mission was established in 1938. The River Lumecha divided Mshope from Njelu, and a portion of the Mtyangimbole mission area lay under Njelu jurisdiction. Missionaries noticed differences in culture on either side of the river, in particular marriage arrangements, which influenced willingness to adopt Christianity (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1950:221). Apparently on the Njelu side of the Lumecha, there was customary payment of bridewealth before the groom could take a woman home as his wife. But on the Mshope side, there was a tradition of bride service called *Pachengo*, whereby the groom married into the bride’s clan, worked for his father-in-law as if a serf and paid little or no bridewealth. The priest wrote:

It is a fact which we can prove statistically that, in places where the bought-marriage has been practised since long ago, the couple, with a bit of good will, encounters little opposition for their Christian marriage, but where the tradition of the Pachenko [sic] still lingers, during all these years there have been difficulties to move young people, or rather their elders, towards allowing a Christian marriage (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1950:221).

Furthermore, “child marriage” was historically more common among the Ndendeuli. The priest explained: “It doesn’t happen very often today, but one can still find in the catechumen lessons, where there are 10-14 year old children, that there are still some who already have a groom whereby their parents have come to a trade agreement and have an obligation towards each other” (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1950:222). Finally, “There are

also heathen customs like ancestor sacrifices and witchcraft. It can be observed that they are rooted here much deeper than we have observed on the other side of the Lumecha” (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1950:222). Much space was devoted to criticising witchcraft practices and “senseless superstition” that was seen to permeate every aspect of the life of family and community, and barely hidden behind the façade of formal Christian names and practices (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1950:216). However, the priest acknowledged that these cultural differences could have been a function of distance from Peramiho Mission and degree of mission influence rather than a ‘tribal’ characteristic. Still, the impression remains of a cultural divide between Ngoni and Ndendeuli which acted as a barrier to Christian conversion. Within the barrier lay stability, discipline and morality; beyond the barrier lay instability, disorder and superstition. Related links between witchcraft, Islam and Ndendeuli nationalism were soon to be made explicit.

Christianity, Islam and Ndendeuli Nationalism, 1950-1955

Missionary Representations of the Separatist Movement

Each of the chronicles examined in the previous sections focused on particular issues of concern to the individual priests in their respective locations in eastern Songea, for example the lack of political authority in Ligera, scattered population in Namabengo, witchcraft in Mtyangimbole, and the politics of education in Kitanda. By 1952 chronicles from all these missions were preoccupied with one issue – the rising threat of Ndendeuli nationalism which was interpreted by all the priests as essentially an anti-Christian movement, a view which was at odds with those of government officials and the Ndendeuli leaders themselves. Thus, in Namabengo we hear how:

The Muslims took the opportunity of Nkosi Dominikus’ death to promote a King from their Wandendeule tribe. It is obvious that they were mainly concerned with putting a Muslim into a governing seat rather than bothering with tribal concerns. But most of the people especially the Christians are on the side of the Wangoni and want a King who is related to their deceased King. We hope that this disagreement will be settled because as far as our mission is concerned a lot depends on the person of the black King and his religious convictions (Namabengo Chronicle 1954:48).

Meanwhile in Ligera, as if all the previous incidents of religious hostility had been building up to this single event, the priest reported on Ndendeuli nationalism. But the prevailing conviction that the issue was overwhelmingly religious was beset with inconsistencies:

Strange as it may seem most of the Mkongo Christians were completely on the side of the so-called freedom movement which was never of any advantage to the Christians, and in fact they supported this movement so strongly that a Mkongo Christian, Kassian, was voted at a National Assembly to be the representative of the Christians in a three-man council of the new Islamic King (Nkosi) Nasoro. The Chronicler had a near escape when he defended the old Catholic dynasty. The Muslims demanded his replacement (Ligera Chronicle 1955:220).

With the sudden recognition of Ndendeuli as an official tribal category in 1953, the Benedictines at the Peramiho headquarters suddenly took eastern Songea seriously: “While this almost pure Islamic kingdom grew in strength, our superior Father Abbot-Bishop Eberhard contemplated how he could fight the spread of Islam effectively. He wanted to establish new missions in the threatened area straight away. His first mission was Kitanda. The second is to be Mkongo. Also our Rovuma outstation is to be given great attention” (Ligera Chronicle, 1955:220). Once again, the Ndendeuli had forced themselves into European and Ngoni consciousness and, in doing so, they catalysed interventions with significant material and cultural consequences.

The border between the new Undendeuli Native Authority and the remainder of Mshope was not fully agreed upon for several years. The main object of the disagreement was the population of some 200 taxpayers who lived near Kitanda mission under Jumbe Kinanda, son of Mkomani. Kinanda refused to join Undendeuli and, like Mbonani, declared that “the aims of the Wandende-ule are the same as those of the then Maji Maji uprising and the Mau Mau”, and chased away an Undendeuli tax collector. Yet they were a small group surrounded by Ndendeuli who were loyal to their newly elected President, and the British were not willing to tolerate such an enclave of foreign government although were reluctant to force compliance (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:224). With Nduna Saidi Palangu of Mbunga accepting the post of Vice-President of Undendeuli (in an act of resistance explored Chapter Seven), the post was filled not only by a “thorough Muslim” but worse still from the missionary perspective, a *Kihami*, which meant he belonged to a witchcraft fraternity. Since the separatist leaders were all Muslims, the Kitanda priest concluded that this entire conflict was largely a religious issue. Yet again there were anomalies: “among the people of Jumbe Kinanda near the mission, half of them are Muslims and yet they stand on the side of the Wangoni. Yet they are not fanatical Muslims like those in the east. Also some Christian villages are on the side

of the Wandende-ule because they say they also want to be free and there also they would have complete religious freedom”. Needless to say, the priest concluded: “the possibilities for positive development of Christianity in this area are not very rosy” (Kitanda Chronicle 1955:224).

Ndendeuli Nationalism as seen from Mtyangimbole

Being nearest to the seat of Nkosi Mbonani, the Mtyangimbole Chronicle has the most thorough analysis of mission perspectives on the causes and consequences of the separatist movement. At Easter 1949, the priest of Mtyangimbole reported how Nkosi Mbonani had returned to the Holy Church. Although he had been baptised in 1904, he had been excluded from the sacraments for many years on account of his “irregular marriage arrangements”, a hindrance which applied to nearly all the local leaders (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1951:77). He wrote to the priest: “I have sinned before God and the Church. I beg to be allowed to return to the mother church. If possible Baba, give me the opportunity to repent. Baba, help me! I am a lost son. And this since the year 1928...” It seemed that he was indeed seriously willing. He refused to be considered for dispensation by the Bishop from the public repentance for up to six days which was required of such sinners. “Since Nkosi Dominikus is looked upon with great respect by his black subjects as well as government, his humble example and his public display of faith has made a big impression on all” wrote the priest on what must have been a genuine and significant demonstration of allegiance with the mission (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1951:77). Finally, in May 1952, Nkosi Mbonani married a young woman at the church, and much to the delight of the missionaries he took the opportunity again to publicly declare his belief in the Christian God.

Thus, Mbonani was able at last to receive the holy sacraments on 18 October 1952. He then proceeded to give a speech to the local school pupils, which proved to be his testament and last will since he died just two weeks later. The speech was recorded in the priest’s chronicle. Apart from efforts to develop his country through encouraging the local tobacco industry, he explained, he had devoted much effort to the removal of *vihome*, the “secret sect of the magicians”. In his speech he declared: “I have got rid of the *vihome*! They still practice their witchcraft in secret but they do not dare use it openly anymore”. And the priest confirmed that his efforts had indeed been a success. Importantly, Mbonani and the missionaries took the view that *vihome* had originated right there in Mshope, and even that the Maji Maji rising had been its “terrible outcome”. All this had a point to it, as was shortly to become apparent, because Mbonani was choosing to link *vihome* not only with Maji Maji

but Ndendeuli nationalism. “I am not going to tolerate these criminals, who are going to bring this country into ruin for a second time!” he declared.

The north-east of my land is full of people who with their queer doings stop the country from progressing. We have to ask the honourable Bishop earnestly that he sends a Father or a Brother there as quickly as possible to reside permanently in Kitanda. If he does not do that then one of these days there will be a great danger. Because there are a lot of people who have been to the coast and other places and they are coming back shortly these days. They claim to be ‘Walimu wa Madarasa’. It is impossible for me to describe all the things that are being imported these days from the Kitanda area. In any case it is a very great danger for our religion. I was there a few days ago, and I observed exactly what is being played out in Mgombasi. I cannot stress it enough: it is exactly the same as before the Maji Maji uprising (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:335).

He concluded his speech with a message to the predominantly Christian pupils of the middle school:

My children, be diligent and make haste so that you then can be the leaders of tomorrow when we are not hear any more. Above all, hold fast to your religion, which is the only true religion of the whole world. Don’t let the thought arise that there could be another religion that is better than the religion of Jesus Christ. No, my children, there is no other! Therefore I have all my life attempted to remove gradually all the obstacles and power of those who tried to prevent our religion, our religion which is the religion of the Catholic Church, the true religion of Jesus Christ! Amen! (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:336).

With these words the nkosi took his leave. One cannot fail to grasp the significance of religious identity and faith in Mbonani’s interpretation of the emerging separatist movement. Ethnicity was not mentioned by Mbonani although this was the dimension of identity recognised by the Government, and stressed by the movement’s leaders who strenuously denied the significance of its religious undercurrents (as discussed in Chapter Seven). Certainly neither party hinted at the role of *vihome*, although for the missionaries and Mbonani this was its sinister method of operation. With Mbonani’s death, the risk of rising Islamic militancy, especially on the front-line at Kitanda, increased the missionaries’ anxiety, who saw it as no less than a secret sect:

Kitanda, the outpost of Mahanje. From there towards the east stretches a big white area! Nomansland? No! Islam-land! There is the area of Likuyu and Luegu, fairly well populated but the Catholic mission doesn’t have a single little place there where they could put their foot down. This is the area of which Nkosi Dominikus said: in the north east of my country is great danger

approaching for our religion! [...] One is dealing here with a secretive movement, a sort of secret sect that intends to establish itself there. The real intentions are certainly as yet disguised, and made to look harmless (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:336).

He believed that the conflict was being expressed as “racial tribal antagonism” and “Islamic anti-Christian motives”, but these were a blind, behind which “anti-European tendencies” were hiding and gaining force (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:336-7). Again, this view was quite at odds with the contemporary government perspective (for example Gulliver 1954:94ff) and that of the leaders of the Ndendeuli movement (such as Hassan Mang’unyuka). With regards racial tribal antagonism, he noted that:

The Wangoni and the Wandendeule have merged namely around the area of the Namabengo-Mtyangimbole-Mahanje missions, almost to one united tribe and in no way does there exist an opposition against the ruling house Mshope. It is different in the north east area, the so-called Islamic area. Here in the last years quite strong, specific aims of the Wandende-ule emerged. At the death of Nkosi Dominikus the hidden opposition came to the fore with one stroke. The message of these Islam-Wandendeule was first of all: we do not want any Mshope, no Mngoni ruler above us (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:337).

Secondly, concerning “Islamic anti-Christian motives”, the priest wrote: “Next to this tribal conflict it soon became apparent that the driving force was Islamic motives. The message was soon put out: we do not want any Mshope, we do not want a Christian ruler! [...] Some who were rather too eager proclaimed that the chapel in Gumbiro is a mosque-to-be, and the school is to be a Koranic school” (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:337). The negotiations dragged on for several months and, as perceived from Mtyangimbole mission, the divide took on an increasingly religious dimension: “The whole election committee in Songea began with the usual tribal antagonisms, but ended quite openly with a clear stand of the two parties: Christians-Muslims” (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:338). However, the division was not so simple: “In general the Muslims which were in the area of influence of the missions, they are anything but fanatical or anti-Christian”. For the priest’s analysis, this point was important because it showed that “there is a third secret power behind these fanatical Muslims”. He reasoned that:

The tribal contrast is quite obviously being pushed forward and the Muslims are fanatical against – firstly the mission, to give the whole issue the impression that the motives are religious. But in the end the whole subject quite definitely seems to have an anti-European tendency. In the coming years, the anti-European drives are going to spread over Africa like a big wave, even more than up to now. [...] That is perhaps why all these secret

movements are not seeking for their seed bed areas around missions but areas with Islamic pure-culture as the 'white [i.e. blank] area' in the east of our Peramiho mission (Mtyangimbole Chronicle 1954:338).

While there was no doubt a degree of paranoia with reports coming in from trouble spots elsewhere in Africa, anti-European sentiment begins to make sense alongside the later support to TANU offered by the Ndendeuli from 1955 onwards, although its expression was never overtly as such. Fifty years later, a retired African District Commissioner in Songea was one of the very few informants who described Ndendeuli nationalism in anti-European terms. When asked whether the Ndendeuli adopted Islam as a reaction against Ngoni-sponsored Christianity, he replied: "it is hard to say this to you, a foreigner, but there was stronger resentment against white influence than among the Ngoni" (Josephat Mhagama 19/7/01, Songea town). Either way, the crucial point is that the European missionaries shared Mbonani's metropolitan perspective on the frontier. Primarily the frontier was a region beyond the reaches of morality, discipline and order.

Conclusions

The historical events, processes and accounts explored in this chapter demonstrate a number of key points about the way in which Islam and Christianity were spread and interacted in the east of Songea. In particular, we can abandon the notion that religious adherence was simply a function of the degree of proselytising effort. In areas such as Kitanda, Mgombasi, Ligera and Namabengo, the arrival of Catholic mission activity between the Wars was rejected by pagans for its political affiliations with both Ngoni and European rulers. Furthermore, its rejection was very often expressed not just by physical relocation and other forms of resistance but by active adoption and promotion of Islam, and the resulting competition created an urgency around religious choice as local Africans sided with one or other party. With the rise of Ndendeuli nationalism, itself linked to the rise of the tobacco industry in the east, the affinities between ethnic and religious identities amplified divisions between Ndendeuli Muslims in the east and Ngoni Christians in the west, although numerous examples demonstrated how a clear-cut dichotomy failed to emerge. European missionaries and the Mshope Ngoni elite were united in their shared metropolitan perspective of the Ndendeuli frontier with its lack of morality, stability and discipline. The most coherent way of conceptualising the history of Christianity and Islam in Songea District is in terms of a dynamic relationship between the frontier and metropole of Ngoni society.

Rural Livelihoods and the Cultural Economy of Tobacco, 1928-2002

During the first 30 years of colonial rule, the limited cash-earning opportunities for Africans within Songea District forced a substantial proportion of the male population to migrate to European-run agricultural plantations or other unskilled labouring opportunities on the Tanganyikan coast. With the introduction of fire-cured tobacco during the 1930s, and its marketing through a cooperative union, the first significant alternative source of cash emerged. By 1940 it was clear that the eastern populations of the District, in particular the Ndendeuli, were investing considerably more effort in tobacco production than their Ngoni counterparts in the more settled communities in central Njelu and Mshope who continued to migrate in large numbers. Divergence in patterns of production was normally explained by government officials, and increasingly by Africans themselves, by inherent differences in the cultural character of each ethnic group, with powerful stereotypes of Ngoni conservatism and Ndendeuli progressivism emerging by the late 1950s.

This chapter explores the reasons behind the divergent pathways of agricultural development in the two regions in order to go beyond the essentialised cultural explanations of late-colonial rule, and to understand their persistence in present-day popular consciousness. I give a brief history of the tobacco industry, and Africans' responses to it, within the context of regional changes in political economy and development policy. I focus on early policies and extension practices of the industry to determine whether these favoured particular geographical areas or social groups in the District. I examine the nature and extent of Native Authority involvement in order to understand how their attitudes to tobacco influenced its uptake by the commoner population. In the last sections I turn to local contemporary African perspectives on these same historical questions, focusing on events over the last fifty years. A picture emerges of inter-linked economic, political, social, cultural and agroecological processes that were embedded in the development of a new, vibrant society and economy in the east. I argue that a valuable way for this historical process to be conceptualised is in terms

of the development of divergent cultural economies at the frontier and metropole of Ngoni society.

Tobacco and the Colonial Economy, 1890-1961

Geographical Variations in the Early Colonial Economy

Until the tobacco industry was established in Songea District in the 1930s the two most important sources of cash income for Africans were portage and labour migration to the coast, opportunities that were largely restricted to younger able-bodied men. The significance of portering declined with the introduction of motorised transport from the 1920s while the considerable importance of labour migration continued until after National Independence. A careful reading of archival sources indicates that important geographical differences in the economy had already emerged before tobacco was introduced. In the settled west of the District there was probably a greater dependence on portage and labour migration, while the scattered eastern populations were able to generate an income from the collection of wild rubber and beeswax. Referring to the German period, Gulliver noted that, “the supply of porter-labour mainly affected the central part of Ungoni, near the Government and trading centres, and many men made over a dozen such trips to the Coast” (Gulliver 1955:1). Similarly, labour migration was also linked to Native Authorities since it was introduced with considerable compulsion by recruiting agents, and according to Mpangala “commonly administered through the akidas, sultans, jumbes and askaris” (Mpangala 1977:53-4; cf. Gulliver 1955:31).²⁴ Arguably, then, recruiters concentrated on more settled regions rather than the scattered populations in the east, whose dispersal might even be seen partly as a response to this kind of harassment.

However, from 1908, Africans were choosing to travel in great numbers to plantations for work. By 1914 the Ngindo neighbours of the Ndendeuli were cited by Iliffe to have been among the few communities that had not become integrated into the colonial labour economy because they were able to collect wild rubber (Iliffe 1979:161-3). This suggests how people chose to remain at home when local alternatives to migration were available. Meanwhile, oral histories indicate that the Ndendeuli were closely involved in the Ngindo rubber and beeswax trade which appears to have operated independently of Ngoni

²⁴ Sunseri writes how, “On a march from Songea to Lindi in 1909, the recruiter Wisliceny directed his 200 recruits and porters, including a former *askari*, to raid villages they passed for food. [...] When

Native Authority control (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). This evidence for economic divergence between east and west needs to be set against Gulliver's assertion that the history of labour migration was much the same before the rise of tobacco on either side of the District (see below).

The rubber trade collapsed in 1913, and sisal formed the new basis to the Tanganyika economy (Iliffe 1979:147), and the recession following the War caused a collapse in local beeswax markets. These events forced many people from throughout the District into labour migration. By 1923 the situation was improving. Beeswax was the main export but prices were still very low, and marketing was still very poorly developed. Private marketing was controlled by a small number of Indian traders in Songea while some 100 registered pedlars, described as "petty itinerant traders either in the employ of Indians or independent", operated throughout the District (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923, page 2). Until this time, crude government marketing operations were organised through the Native Authorities who were ordered to collect local produce in return for cash. Needless to say the distribution of benefits was skewed towards the ruling elite: "It was found that by the time the distribution had gone through the Sultan, the Jumbe, the village headman and the family head, it was incapable of further division, so that the old lady who had provided her two or three pounds of meal had more often than not to be content with a teaspoonful of salt instead of her ten or twenty cents" (TNA/155/1733/15, SDAR 1923, page 8). From 1923 the Government organised a market in Songea town and the Native Authorities were bypassed. With the introduction of Indirect Rule, tribute payment as the means of remuneration for Native Authorities was also officially abolished and replaced by salaries for senior postholders. Nevertheless, the structures and opportunities for marketing had already diverged between east and west. Despite varied interventions, this trend continued throughout colonial rule, with greater reliance on private and informal marketing networks in the east as opposed to organised structures at Native Authority *barazas* in the west. Furthermore, the west of the District had a growing number of missions offering important markets for local produce and an organisation to ensure European requirements were met. These opportunities should not be exaggerated, however; the administration was well aware that labour migration offered the only means to increase African incomes, and tax revenues. Thus, the DC wrote in 1923: "Every opportunity has therefore been taken of encouraging the departure of natives for work" (TNA/1733:15, SDAR 1923, page 18).

another villager fought a porter who was pillaging his millet field, Wisliceny had him beaten twenty-

Progress in agricultural development took off from June 1928 with the arrival of Stenhouse, the first Agricultural Officer, who introduced the first improved varieties of crops (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, 8/2/32, page 2).²⁵ The focus was on Robusta coffee, tobacco and cotton. Arabica coffee had already been introduced in Umatengo in the mid-1920s by entrepreneurial chiefs such as Chrysostomus Makita, demonstrating that the apparent disinterest in tobacco that was to emerge among Njelu Native Authorities was not merely a function of 'elite culture' in the District (Haule 1973). Indeed, Njelu chiefs were among those who expressed a strong interest in cotton, "in order that their people could stay at their homes in preference to going to the coast each year" but the crop was officially abandoned in 1931 due to unacceptable levels of predation by insects (TNA/SDB, Agriculture, Sheet 23, 1931, Godson). Tobacco was first mentioned as a potential cash crop for Songea District in 1926 (TNA/SDB 'A', Agriculture Continued, 1926, Longland), and an economic survey in 1928 confirmed that a tobacco industry was the most promising option for economic development: "These activities are fitted especially for the Ungoni and Matengo regions, the Riftlands between, in all of which tobacco grows like a weed on the favourable soils" (TNA/SDB, Economic Survey, 1928, page 9).

This conclusion determined the geographical spread of early extension effort throughout the District, which came to be focused on particular Native Authority centres in central Ungoni and especially Umatengo, rather than eastern Songea where tobacco was soon to thrive (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1930, page 9).²⁶ From 1931, seedlings were distributed from nurseries established at "every big centre in the District", with the exception of the Lake Shore, which we can safely assume included Likuyu (TNA/SDB, Sheet 26, 1931). The aim was extensive coverage within targeted areas, such as Likuyu, with seed beds prepared "wherever ten or more growers could be found, and where proper supervision could be given" (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1931, pages 3-4). Thus, importantly, extension effort was responsive to, and proportional to, interest of individual farmers, and not just dependent on the efforts of Native Authorities. Nevertheless, under this arrangement a keen jumbe or nduna would have accelerated the promotion of tobacco, and Nduna Sekamaganga in Likuyu may have done just

five times and confiscated all his possessions" (Sunseri 2002:140).

²⁵ A list of introduced plantings between 1928 and 1930 included improved varieties of maize, sorghum, wheat, barley, beans, rice, groundnuts, black gram, cowpeas, cotton, sugar beet, cocoa, gold leaf tobacco, heavy western tobacco, *Grevillia robusta*, *Albizzia moluccana*, eucalyptus, walnut, almond, fruits, and Robusta coffee (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, 8/2/32, pages 6-9).

²⁶ In Ungoni in 1932, after a false start, instructors came to be located at Ndirima, Songea town, Luhira, and Likuyu Fusi, with just a single instructor east of Songea town, at Likuyu (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, Stenhouse, 8/2/32, page 10).

this, given the favourable reports of his character and ability by Africans and Europeans. Certainly a difference had already emerged in the apparent interest of the Nkosi Usangila in Njelu and Nkosi Mbonani in Mshope, which was clearly linked to performance of instructors posted to their respective villages (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, Stenhouse, 8/2/32):

(i) Mohamed Mkeso – Gumbiro. A diligent worker, who, when backed by an energetic chief does excellent tobacco work. He is running a model native shamba at Gumbiro. Wages 20/- per month.

(ii) Mshahara Mgati – Ndirima. An intelligent, and energetic worker, at present handicapped by lack of support from the people amongst whom he works. Good at tobacco work. Wages 17/50 per month.

By 1931 the slow progress was no longer tolerated, and “a vigorous campaign was waged to greatly increase production” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1931, pages 3-4). Tobacco culture and curing became the explicit priority for extension work in the District (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1931, page 1). Indeed, there were fears that the industry might never be established.²⁷ The response was clear. The DO wrote: “Exhaustive propaganda was commenced from the Boma and was brought to a climax during the visit of the Provincial Commissioner in October/November when both he and the District Officer did all in their power in public barazas and in private talks to stimulate or refresh the native interest in tobacco” (TNA/SDB, Sheet 26, 1931). Although such meetings brought European officials and African instructors in direct contact with interested farmers, the level of enthusiasm for tobacco of respective Native Authorities was still important, and their powers of persuasion, and coercion, were harnessed by the administration to increase production (TNA/SDB, General Baraza of the Chiefs of the Wangoni, 16/11/31, Chiefs Barazas, 1931). Similarly, in 1932 we hear that “a number of natives sent in by the chiefs of outlying parts received thorough training in all tobacco growing and curing activities”, who returned home, planted tobacco and taught their neighbours. Apparently, this initiative came from the headmen themselves, who stated that “they would themselves be responsible for encouraging these trained men to show a good example to others in the area” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1932, Stenhouse, page 6). Again the enthusiasm of Native Authorities made a difference.

An important conclusion to be drawn from the archival sources is that, for many if not most households, income generation had become a choice between tobacco and migration:

²⁷ Reflecting on the campaign so far, an entry in the District Book noted that part of the problem had apparently been the Agricultural Officer’s poor grasp of Kiswahili, while propaganda had probably been insufficient (TNA/SDB, Sheets 24-5, c.1931).

It is to be foreseen that the greatest drawback to tobacco production in Songea will be this; that the tobacco needs constant attention especially during the last five days before gathering and during the curing period: that the Songea native has inherited from his ancestors a Wanderlust and cannot remain in his home for long periods; he is always moving about, visiting an aunt here, a father-in-law there, now his chief, then his Nduna – and his tobacco goes uncared-for during the period of those visits (TNA/SDB, Sheet 26, 1931).

Although the analysis may appear flawed, with an essentialised Ngoni ‘wanderlust’, we see how tobacco production required full commitment throughout much of the year, and as such was incompatible with labour migration. The key requirement was commitment, as Stenhouse observed: “The tobacco crop is not popular amongst natives generally, mainly because they will not follow instructions, and because they plant very small fields, and are disappointed when they get a small return in consequence”. He estimated that the minimum planting required for a decent monetary return was a plot of 30 by 30 yards. However, he found that it was “almost impossible to persuade natives to adopt this size of field as a standard” (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, Stenhouse, 8/2/32, page 13). A further crucial observation was that those who employed labour to produce tobacco could only make a profit in very good seasons, and since this applied to practically all Native Authorities, it was “almost impossible to make these chiefs, and headmen personally interested in tobacco production” (TNA/504/6/5, ANR, Stenhouse, 8/2/32, page 13). While Ngoni Native Authorities were more able than most to cope with the risks associated with agricultural innovation, it appears that more lucrative alternative sources of income were at hand, not least through informal payment of tribute. Meanwhile, in Undendeuli there simply was no elite, since there had been practically no opportunity for economic or political stratification to emerge. Slightly wealthier or larger Ndendeuli households emerged as the keenest innovators of the time, and the knowledge and culture of tobacco production spread through their egalitarian kinship networks of economic cooperation with relative ease.

The world depression during the early 1930s probably accelerated uptake of tobacco by reducing the relative value of alternative income sources, and allowing “the best type of native to try tobacco growing” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1932, pages 4-5).²⁸ This year represented the turning point, and production was more than double the previous year as indicated in the table below. In 1934 we hear that, “The native attitude towards the tobacco

²⁸ In 1932, it was estimated that the cash value for all local produce traded from the District was about 35,000 shillings, or rather less than one shilling per taxpayer as paid to the producer, and although the figures were approximate, “they bear out that the contribution to trade of Songea natives is very small indeed apart from wage earning labour” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1932, page 12).

crop is now in the nature of a ‘gold rush’ and it has been considered necessary to institute a certain measure of control” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR, 1934, Twells, pages 3-4). The geographical distribution of tobacco promotion was restricted for the first time, with “no further encouragement” west of Lipumba in Umatengo (TNA/155/AGR/1/18/6/II, Sen. Agric. Officer, Lindi, to Agric. Asst. Songea, 23/5/34). We also see a shift in the location of demonstration farms with three in central parts of Ungoni (Gumbiro, Ndirima and Luhira), just one in Matengo (Lipumba) and none in Undendeuli. Twells wrote how, “the instructional value of the farms was invaluable. Demonstrations of the various operations required in tobacco culture were held at least every month, and native growers constantly visited the farms to observe the methods employed” (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1934, Twells, page 6). Again this underscores the significance of the Ndendeuli’s achievement.

Approximate Annual Production of Tobacco in Songea, 1930-1967
(Source: Redmond 1976:71)

Year	Tonnes	Year	Tonnes
1930	1	1949	853
1931	1	1950	1185
1932	2	1951	592
1933	6	1952	435
1934	32	1953	242
1935	106	1954	677
1936	121	1955	498
1937	178	1956	311
1938	386	1957	212
1939	510	1958	568
1940	444	1959	410
1941	352	1960	378
1942	310	1961	1068
1943	467	1962	445
1944	172	1963	422
1945	157	1964	271
1946	358	1965	1135
1947	240	1966	1500
1948	670	1967	3100

Establishing an Industry, 1934-1940

The decision to market the tobacco through a cooperative union was taken in 1934 along with the first steps towards its establishment. At first there was much idealistic talk of grassroots development of a cooperative so that they “adhere closely the principles and spirit of the movement” (TNA/155/274, Latham, Sen. Agric. Officer, Lindi, to PC, Lindi, 21/12/34). But

in practice, since its establishment in 1936, the Ngoni-Matengo Cooperative Marketing Union Limited, or Ngomat, was a top-down association of growers who had practically no understanding of these loftier ideals (RH/Mss.Afr.s.1010, Report on the Songea Tobacco Industry and NMCMU, Northcote and McGregor, Annex. I, 1940).²⁹ Importantly, the entire procedure for its establishment was largely independent of the Native Authorities:

(a) The Agricultural Assistant will supply a list of established tobacco growers and their areas, i.e. a list of men who have planted three years or more. (b) The District Officer will proceed on safari through the tobacco growing areas, he will call barazas at each centre and explain to the growers the aims and principle of cooperation and how it affects them. He will also sound the feeling towards co-operation in general. (c) The District Officer will form a Committee from among the established growers for each area and appoint one of their members to act as Secretary. The appointment of the Committees will be done in consultation with the established growers. (d) Each of these Committees will appoint representatives to a central Committee which will be constituted with a President and a Secretary together with the appointed representatives. The appointment of a Treasurer will be made at a later date (TNA/155/274, Report of Meeting at District Office Regarding Cooperation, 23/11/34).

However, as before, Native Authorities were the hosts and overseers of these new activities. In the east, where the ndunas and jumbes were fewer in number and for several reasons had less authority, this process was arguably more like a direct link between instructors and communities of farmers. In Njelu, however, extension was arguably mediated to a greater extent by Native Authorities who appeared not to share the administration's enthusiasm for the crop. Fourteen tobacco markets were established in 1935 – two in Umatengo and 12 in Ungoni – and from this time onwards these centres were used as the primary sites for extension work, at the expense of nurseries and demonstration plots at Native Authority barazas (TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1935, Twells, pages 5-6, 9).³⁰

By the mid-1930s, tobacco became the most important crop in the District, and exceeded beeswax in terms of its overall contribution to the agricultural economy, while the combined incomes from tobacco, beeswax and sesame were offering a real alternative to labour migration for these eastern populations. In the mid-1930s the only officially-

²⁹ See also TNA/155/AGR/1/18/6/11, Production Figures 1936, 6/2/37. Although regional differences were not so clear by 1936, greater production in the east may be discerned, with active buying centres at Lumecha, Liula, Mkwera (near Matimira) and Namtumbo; the very low production in Likuyu Fusi and Mara (both in central Njelu) despite high levels of extension is indicative.

³⁰ By 1939, promotion had reached outlying Undendeuli communities such as Mchomoro and Jumbe Salim's (see Map 15) although this had been carried out by the Agricultural Department against the advice of the Union who was preoccupied with quality control and strongly discouraged geographical expansion of the industry (TNA/155/coop/27, Twells, Manager NMCMU, to DO, Songea, 6/12/39). Again, central Ungoni was the focus of operations.

recognised Indian trader outside Songea town was based at Luegu in Undendeuli who bought beeswax and sesame, supporting other evidence that beeswax was probably historically more important to the scattered eastern populations than those in central Njelu. Meanwhile, central Njelu had the advantage of mission markets, in particular Peramiho which purchased considerable quantities of groundnuts (for processing into fuel) of comparable value to each of these other three commodities. Tentatively, then, there were better marketing opportunities in the west than the east. The average annual quantity of crops purchased locally by the missions between 1934 and 1937 was 564 tonnes, while for all other traders (i.e. in Songea town and Luegu) the official figure was 305 tonnes.³¹ These differences should not be overstated, and arguably it was emerging differences in off-farm income opportunities rather than crop markets that contributed more to the divergence in tobacco production. By 1940 there were some 8000 tobacco growers, compared with an estimated 6-7000 labour migrants. Production statistics for this year reveal the broad regional differences that were to remain until the present-day (RH/Mss.Afr.s.1010, NMCMU Report 1940, pages 6-7). These data and others are represented in Maps 15 to 17.

Aligning Tobacco Production with Native Authority Control, 1940-1945

From the start, efforts were made to align the 15 primary societies with the Native Administration with the appointment of Nduna Laurent Fusi (of Likuyu Fusi, central Njelu) as first President of the Union, while Hassan Saidi became Vice-President. Unlike Fusi and most Ngoni rulers, Saidi was a tobacco grower (RH/Mss.Afr.s.1010, NMCMU Report 1940, page 5). However, the Union, and the authorities, diverged. In 1942 societies were establishing markets and erecting buildings without reference to the local Native Authority. Stenhouse wrote: "Quite apart from the legal aspect of such matters, ordinary good neighbourly relations require that the president of a society should consult with, and comply with the requirements of the local Native Authority. The manager should be satisfied at all times that this is being done" (TNA/155/coop27/V, Stenhouse to Cole, 10/2/42). At this time, there were ten committee members and none of them were chiefs. To counter this trend, the DC proposed, and the Union agreed, that Chiefs Zulu, Mbonani and Makita (of Umatengo) should be appointed ex-officio patrons of the Union, in order to increase their involvement and interest in the industry (TNA/155/coop27/V, Asst. Registrar [DC] to Manager, Ngomat, 23/1/42; *et seq.*). Soon the primary societies were also encouraged to invite their respective ndunas to act as patrons. The DC wrote: "This step will bring the subchiefs into closer contact

³¹ See export figures in TNA/504/18, SDAAR 1934, page 9; SDAAR 1935, page 9; SDAAR 1936,

with cooperative society members in their area and emphasise their relationship between them” (TNA/155/ coop 27/VI, DC to PC, 15/7/42).

In 1945, the Registrar of Cooperative Societies noted, “as a general rule, the boundaries of a society should conform to the boundaries of the most appropriate Native Authority, or Sub-Native Authority, as the case may be. This makes for dovetailing in with the Native Administration” (TNA/155/coop27/VIII, Reg. Coop. Socs. to Asst. Reg. [DC], 13/4/45, *et seq.*). This particular project was of course practically impossible due to the boundary problem, especially in Njelu. A revealing example of its impact, and the weak links between the primary society and the Native Authority was the proposed establishment of Lusewa Cooperative Society in October 1946 on the south-eastern periphery of the District. As was normal policy, the new society members had been busy constructing an access road to market their tobacco as far as Jumbe Salim’s, 90 miles east of Songea (TNA/155/C2/8, DC to Reg. Coop. Socs., 5/10/46). There were 200 members at the time, predominantly Yao. The 20 founding members were from 13 separate named communities including Lusewa and as far away as Mchomoro to the north. These founders were all under Nkosi Korofindo of Njelu, but under three different ndunas: seven under Nasoro, eleven under Kwizombe and two under Zamtanga. Similarly they were under four different jumbes (TNA/155/C2/8, Correspondence, n.d.). This shows how the people were divided between Native Authorities in this area and begs the question: which nduna or jumbe would have felt obliged to promote tobacco among such a heterogeneous population? More fundamentally it shows how Native Authorities were largely irrelevant to tobacco production in the east of Songea, while in Njelu it appears that their effect was largely negative.³²

Tobacco and the Post-War Economy, 1945-1961

The post-War economy in Songea was still regarded as very underdeveloped, with a few “extremely poor” shops, although by 1950 the number of African traders had increased seven-fold since the early 1920s (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 4). Since the outbreak of the Second World War the administration had been preoccupied, almost obsessed, with food security, with an expanding non-producing population in Songea town. African farmers had become dangerously “cash-crop minded” at the expense of food production, according to

page 1; SDAAR 1937, page 1.

³² In 1955, the DC used the occasion of the Queen’s Birthday to try again to strengthen the link between chiefs and tobacco, revealing how this had implicitly been an ongoing struggle on the part of the administration: “It is necessary for the Native Authorities and the Chiefs to play a very big part in stimulating increased production by example and leadership. They may be sure that their activities in

those in the administration who appeared unable to understand that local livelihood decisions were not determined by the strategic requirements of the Territorial economy. Geographical expansion of tobacco thus continued to be put on hold. Meanwhile the Njelu population benefited from the growing demand from government and missions alike.³³ The impact of missions as crop markets in outlying areas was very significant, for example at Mahanje in Ubena, where the Agricultural Officer wrote in 1953: "Marketing sore point as the Mission the sole Market for the entire district" (TNA/504/8/2B, SD June 1953, Priestner). Furthermore, the missions were allegedly increasing their proportion of trade by paying more than controlled prices (TNA/504/6, Interim SDAAR 1948, Clegg, page 6). Local traders were not entirely blamed for the state of the trade network, since three of the four economic crops were being handled by other agencies: coffee and tobacco by the Union, and wheat by Peramiho (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 8).

Other crop surpluses were sold to local Indian shop owners, many of whom worked with sub-agents in outlying areas, in particular Undendeuli where there were "many individual Africans who set up shop from the proceeds of a good tobacco year" with finance from the Songea Indians (TNA/155/Last Box/Annual Reports (Agriculture) 1946-54, SDAAR 1954, page 12). Again we see how entrepreneurs in the east were taking advantage of the lack of alternative facilities, and developing indigenous trade networks in the region which reached into every community. Thus, we hear in 1956 that all other trade was in private hands, "done from door to door by the Indian traders of Songea supported by sub-agents in the villages" (SDA, SDAAR 1956, Brookbank, page 11). Indeed, contemporary figures for quantity of produce handled respectively by traders, Native Authority markets and the Benedictine missions indicate that the proportion handled by the latter was now much less significant than it had been in the mid-1930s, with the private (African and Indian) traders handling some ten times more produce (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954). Meanwhile the Ungoni economy appeared to be stagnating with what contemporary officials called a vicious cycle of under-development due to their apparent disinterest in tobacco and continued dependence on labour migration. Government markets were back in vogue by 1956, and expanded greatly over the coming years. Although this may have disrupted the indigenous system of trade that had been building up over the years, especially in the east, by 1959 the

this direction [or lack of activity (crossed out in pencil in draft)] will be watched very closely by Government" (TNA/155/C1/1, Draft Speech for the Occasion of the Queen's Birthday 1955, Songea).

³³ In 1950, Lumby wrote: "Food for labourers, school children estimated at approximately 4000; is proving very difficult to obtain. Roman Catholic Peramiho report that two boarding schools have been closed down owing to lack of food" (TNA/155/127/V, MR September 1950, Lumby).

system covered the District, and one more indicator of development that had set Undendeuli apart from Ungoni was approaching equality.³⁴

A decade of restrictions on geographical expansion ended in December 1947 with the news that the Union's agents in London had written "asking for more and yet more tobacco" (TNA/155/coop27/IX, GM of Ngomat, 4/12/47). By 1950 extension was pushed into Mchomoro in the far east of the District, and construction of a vast new tobacco factory was completed in Songea town (16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 13). Unlike other crops such as maize, the quality and spread of extension were crucial factors in the uptake of tobacco in the remote corners of the District, as evidenced at Mkongoleko in northern Njelu during Lumby's visit in 1950: "the Jumbe and his people complained bitterly that nobody had ever come to teach them how to cure their leaves", and he responded by "sending someone there to help them" (TNA/155/127/V, SD July 1950). The focus of this new production drive was firmly directed at Ungoni, since coffee was "undoubtedly the favourite" cash crop in Umatengo and there were growing concerns about deforestation from fire-curing operations. The same applied to Ubeni (TNA/155/Last Box, SAP 1953, Chambers, pages 22-3). And as we saw in Chapter Three, after Undendeuli seceded from Mshope the region quickly became recognised as the priority for all agricultural extension in the District. Despite these efforts, production fell dramatically until 1957 when "the industry was at its lowest ebb" (SDA, SDAAR 1957, Muir, page 1). The response was another "all out campaign" – perhaps the first since the days of Lumby's tie-ridging and cassava drives, but executed with considerably more sensitivity through demonstration plots and monthly letters to growers (SDA, SDAAR 1957, Muir, page 5). With the help of good weather, the response by 1959 was universally described as, "Sound if not spectacular progress" (SDA, SDAAR 1959, Lewis, page 1) and the Director of Agriculture wrote to congratulate his staff throughout the Province (SDA, SDAAR 1958, PAO to Sen. Agric. Field Officer, Lewis, Songea, 3/4/59).

Labour Migration and Tobacco Production in the 1950s

While the Songea administration tried very hard to promote labour migration in the 1920s, by the late 1940s there was a complete reversal in thinking with considerable anxiety about its

³⁴ In Undendeuli, there were 19 markets: Namtumbo (4), Mchomoro (2), Likuyu (5), Kitanda [at the mission rather than government], Luegu (3), Likonde (1), Mkongo (3) (DC, Othman, to all barazas in Undendeuli, 2/4/59: Markets in Undendeule Division, Songea District 1959). In Njelu, there were 21 markets: Lusewa (6), Kikunja (3), Magagura (1), Mfaranyaki (1), Ligeria (3), Mpitimbi (3), Muhukuru (1), and RC markets at Ruanda, Liparamba, and Mgazini (DC to all barazas in Njellu, 15/5/59. Markets in Njellu Division). In Mshope, there were nine markets at the following places: Gumbiro (2), Msindo (5), and RC Mission markets at Madaba and Wino (DC to all barazas in Mshope, 16/5/59. Markets in Mshope Division, 1959) (Source: TNA/155/Last Box/Market Arrangements 1959).

deleterious impact on agricultural development, prompting the DC to write: "I feel that it is essential for future territorial developments... that there should be a change of outlook by the Wangoni. At present the wanderlust is still strong, and they go off to far away sisal estates. Let them realise as soon as possible that they should first meet the large demands of the Southern Province" (TNA/155/10/6, H/O Notes, 29/9/48, pages 2-3). As with the balance between cash and food crops, the administration failed to see that individual Ngoni were not particularly interested in the strategic needs of the Province, yet such judgements were conducive to the overall notion of Ngoni conservatism (TNA/155/10/6, H/O Notes, 29/9/48, page 2-3). In 1950 a different DC wrote: "As things stand at the moment the lack of a ready flow of reliable labour will undoubtedly prove one of the greatest difficulties in developing the district". His analysis identified three causes: "conservatism", "a natural love of wandering" and "a search for higher wages" (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, page 9). By 1953, the administration was so concerned that Dr Gulliver, Government Sociologist, was called in to investigate its causes, consequences and remedies (TNA/504/8/1, SDAAR 1953, Chambers, page 11).

Gulliver's survey concluded that a surprising one-third of all men in Ungoni and Undendeuli were outside the District at any one time, typically for up to 18 months. In fact, total absenteeism was at least 40 percent since many were working elsewhere within the District, mostly in Songea town (Gulliver 1955:2-3). Two-thirds of migrants were under the age of 30 and the majority were bachelors (1955:5, 14). The "hard core" who had not been away by the age of 40 comprised just five percent of adult men (1955:6). Unskilled work accounted for the vast majority of jobs, mostly in the sisal industry (1955:9). The proportion with essential skills in "genuinely skilled work" was just five percent (1955:10). Gulliver noted that this proportion was probably in keeping with similar remote rural areas, and he judged that "it is an unfortunate commentary on the type of education provided and the degree of success of the intensive educational policy that its human products still go away and take up unskilled labouring in the proportion of 9 men in every 10" (1955:10).

Regarding motives for migration, Gulliver debunked a number of popular myths, asserting that, "Without question the overwhelming reason why Ngoni leave their homes and their country to seek work abroad is economic. Men cannot, or feel they cannot, earn sufficient money at home to satisfy their basic cash needs and their minimum standard of living". To underscore the point he added that "almost every man stated that he would have preferred to stay at home but was compelled to migrate by force of what appeared to him to be economic necessity" (1955:16). The most important single incentive was to raise sufficient bridewealth for a wife, while a minority might invest in a shop or livestock (1955:22-23). We

begin to realise how tobacco transformed livelihoods and aspirations, yet again this conclusion begs the question: why didn't the Ngoni grow tobacco?

Regional Variations in the Incidence of Labour Migration

By the mid-1950s there were marked variations in the incidence of labour migration within different parts of the District. For Njelu Chiefdom, 37 percent of all adult males were absent, while for Mshope and Undendeuli the figure was 28 percent. This difference is significant, but when individual cases were examined local differences were often striking, with absenteeism varying from 10 to 50 percent of adult males. The basic pattern, concluded Gulliver, was that migration was inversely proportional to tobacco production. Thus, 39 percent of all adult males were absent from Tuliani, an area of north-east Undendeuli that had not yet adopted tobacco, while 12 percent were absent from Mchomoro, an area of eastern Undendeuli that was growing tobacco; 59 percent were absent from Mpambano in central Njelu, and 35 percent from Ngadinda, a neglected area of western Mshope (1955:2-3). Importantly, in locations with high levels of tobacco production, a new generation of younger men was growing up that had not been away and had no desire to do so. In the Luegu area of Undendeuli, 27 percent of men had never migrated, while in Ngadinda the figure was only 1.4 percent (1955:6).

Local variations in household cash requirements shed further light.³⁵ The average minimum cash requirements for a numerically average family of two adults and two children was estimated to be between 70 and 80 shillings per year including 20 shillings for tax and at least 45 shillings for clothing, with the bulk of food being grown in family fields and requiring no cash inputs (1955:18). Half of migrants returned with more than 75 shillings in cash as well as clothing worth an additional 50 shillings (1955:21). Unsurprisingly perhaps, Gulliver concluded that, "low incomes at home correlate with a heavy incidence of labour migration", and this relationship was approximately reflected in the east/west divergence in tobacco production (1955:19). According to Gulliver, in 1951, the primary societies producing the greatest quantities of tobacco were Litola, Msindo, Namtumbo, Mkongo and Liula, all of which were in the east of the District. In that year, average payments to cultivators from these societies was approximately 142 shillings, while their counterparts in the rest of Ungoni were receiving less than 70 shillings. But it was the exceptions to the rule that proved most revealing. In 1953, the tiny minority of households growing tobacco in

³⁵ On average the annual inflow of cash from labour migration was about 14 shillings for every family in Ungoni and Undendeuli, or "one-fifth of the annual cash requirements of a family at the minimum standard" (Gulliver 1955:36).

Likuyu Fusi were receiving just 11 shillings each, while in Mbinga Toatoa (central Njelu) just one man grew any tobacco at all (1955:24).

Extreme examples such as these demonstrate beyond doubt that soils alone cannot explain uptake of tobacco. Importantly, Gulliver and his contemporaries also had trouble explaining the distribution of tobacco. He wrote: “The reason for this localisation of tobacco production is not easy to see. According to the Agricultural Officer (Mr G. Brookbank) there is, as far as is known, no reason to think that soil conditions are responsible. Little direct investigation has been made but it is generally agreed that geological and soil conditions are fairly uniform throughout Ungoni” (1955:25). This much is confirmed by many other archival, scientific and oral sources. However, there was another dimension to agroecology, namely the history of land use: “without doubt, parts of Njelu Chiefdom which have been occupied now for 80 years with a relatively high density of population, have been heavily cultivated to the point of fertility exhaustion, and this may well have affected tobacco production there – e.g. the triangle formed by Ndirima, Matamondo and Songea town, where the density of population is 2 to 3 times that of the average for the region” (1955:25). In contrast, the east had been settled for some fifty years by a lower population density. This does indeed appear to be a significant reason. However, there are several problems with the idea of worked-out soils being the sole explanation for the distribution of tobacco, most strikingly indicated by the successes of the few individual tobacco farmers in present-day Maposeni (central Njelu). Surely, there was ample fertile land in Njelu in the 1930s, when the first signs of their apparent indifference to tobacco were emerging? As we shall see in Chapter Six, soil fertility is relevant, but it needs to be seen in conjunction with a closely related factor, the mobility of populations in different parts of the District, which in turn is influenced by social, political, cultural and historical factors as well as ecology.

Gulliver denied the significance of sociological difference: “as a Sociologist, I cannot see that this localisation of production has any relation to current political, social or psychological conditions and attitudes amongst the people” (1955:25). Yet we soon see that Gulliver is referring here specifically to the absence of essential tribal characteristics, since his argument is based upon the observation that the correlation between tobacco production and ethnicity was far from perfect: “This eastern region of high production cuts across tribal and political boundaries, covering about half of Undendeuli and parts of both Mshope and Njelu chiefdoms. [...] there are large areas of Undendeuli in which agricultural production and cash-earning remain low and labour migration is high...” (1955:25). This analysis fails to recognise the multiple factors interacting to create considerable variations in the responses of individuals to innovations such as tobacco, and a clear-cut correlation with ethnicity would

have been extremely unlikely.³⁶ Gulliver did, however, raise the issue of cultural conservatism: “It is true, of course, that the Ndendeuli have escaped much of the somewhat stultifying tradition of these Ngoni Chiefdoms, and in their striving towards political independence (now achieved) they have obtained an initiative and impetus of great value” (1955:25). A more nuanced understanding of cultural difference is still required.

Likuyu Fusi was an anomaly for many of Gulliver’s conclusions, being the community nearest to Peramiho Mission, and, as will be seen, had much in common with Maposeni. Seventy-five percent of households earned more than 70 shillings in 1952, yet there was also a particularly high absentee rate of 46 percent. Their training allowed them to earn higher wages as skilled workers elsewhere in the territory, most notably Dar es Salaam (1955:27). Some 40 percent of migrants were employed in skilled occupations, as masons, smiths, carpenters, clerks, a direct result, in Gulliver’s analysis, of proximity to the Peramiho Mission (1955:9). Meanwhile other central Njelu villages such as Mpambano, Mgazini and Mbinga Toatoa all conformed to his overall conclusions, which suggests that the immediate influence of the mission on local economic activities was limited to a radius of ten, perhaps even five, miles. Yet economics was just part of the explanation. On account of their extended schooling, wrote Gulliver,

They, and almost only they amongst these rural Ngoni, are fired with something like a western-type ambition to improve their standards, to enlarge their demand and to bring other Ngonis’ luxuries into their class of necessities. ...with the artisan-trained men there is for the first time a body of people who have higher and more expensive ambitions. Those ambitions are realised by seeking the highest paid employment – that is, by labour migration (1955:27).

This plausible analysis indicates how a different economy and a different culture were developing alongside each other, generating new opportunities and aspirations. But this was happening only in the Christian core of central Njelu.

³⁶ Geist also appears to dismiss any relationship between ethnicity and uptake of tobacco in Songea District on similar grounds of imperfect correlation, favouring environmental and economic explanations (Geist 1996:18-19).

The Impact of Colonial Native Authorities

To what extent is it valid to say that the Native Authorities were a negative influence on the uptake of tobacco? What was the basis to their apparent indifference? One of the pioneer leaders of TANU before Independence in Songea answered this from the perspective of a progressive anti-colonialist: “The Njelu ruling clans believed they had nothing to gain – they were comfortable in their positions of power with their subject people beneath them doing all the work. [...] They weren’t interested in the economics of it all. This is not what they valued. They were being given cattle, produce, women, for free! What use did they have for money?” (Peter Moyo, 9/7/01, Peramiho). Furthermore he rejected the suggestion that they were reluctant to encourage tobacco and indeed the formation of primary societies because their political and economic power would have been threatened by the development of their subjects. Similarly, Cassian Njunde of Peramiho was asked whether Nkosi Usangila of Njelu (who ruled 1926-41) had promoted tobacco. He replied: “Well, one would have seen the results if he had done that! The local government had no interest in tobacco – that’s why people here were not eager to cultivate tobacco” (Cassian Njunde, 31/7/01, Peramiho). Support for this thesis comes from evidence for the progressive attitude of Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope regarding tobacco:

It is true that Mbonani was different on this aspect [of pushing tobacco] than Usangila. The difference was very much contributed by education. Usangila was not educated and knew little about building up an economy – he was only interested in the gains to be had from being a ruler – getting goats and chickens from here and there... Mbonani was better educated and saw the importance of building up an economy, and he encouraged people with that knowledge (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

Not all Njelu ndunas were inactive. Germanus Kumburu, who grew up in Mpitimbi in south-central Njelu in the 1940s and 1950s, recalled how his nduna, Beno Gama, had encouraged people to grow tobacco but that only some of his subjects would accept it: “Beno organised meetings and told them it was the crop that they should grow. He brought in seeds and supervised the making of seedbeds”. I asked how Beno had promoted tobacco. Was there a sense of working together to build up an economy, or was it simply a matter of coercion? He replied: “It was force! Some obeyed his order to grow tobacco, but others ignored him. There wasn’t anything like a movement involving tobacco production. The decision of whether or not to obey Beno’s order was taken individually on an individual basis” (Ali Swalei ‘A’ and

Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). Responses such as this begin to suggest that Ngoni were acting individualistically while for the Ndendeuli uptake of tobacco and other forms of social action were linked to a kind of social movement.³⁷ Another informant in central Njelu summarised his opinion of the role played by traditional leaders in tobacco growing: “They were not active as far as tobacco was concerned. The leaders only became active with Barongo. Before Barongo, the leaders only ‘urged’ people to grow cassava, and finger millet” (Alois and Augustin Haule Egit, 12/7/01, Litisha). Barongo instigated a full-scale campaign to force the Ngoni to grow tobacco in the mid-1960s as described below.

An unusual take on the attitudes of the Ngoni elite was proposed by an Ndendeuli elder: “The Ngoni, as rulers, didn’t accept tobacco because they thought it was another manoeuvre by the Europeans to rule them. They had experienced a similar process when the Germans came, they came in with gifts to have them accepted as friends. They thought tobacco was another ‘charm’ to rule them. So the Ngoni reasoned that the slaves had better do it” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town). Herein lay one of the few politicised explanations for their apparent indifference. I asked him whether it had been the entire Ngoni population that failed to grow tobacco, or just the elite ruling class? The reply introduced the overlapping relationship between ethnicity and class, with an eastern Mshope accent betraying inferior status:

The Pangwa were integrated with the Ngoni as soldiers at first, but they became assimilated into the Ngoni. Therefore they also became a ruling class compared to the Ndendeuli. So if an Ndendeuli came into this area [Njelu] they would be made to do all the work. Even if you pretended to be an Ngoni from Mshope and came here (Njelu) you would be treated with respect. It wasn’t easy to distinguish an Ndendeuli from Mshope because the dialect was similar in certain areas. But from Namtumbo – you couldn’t hide it (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town).

The picture that emerges here does not support the notion of active, targeted suppression by Native Authorities in Njelu of individuals ambitious to grow tobacco. Instead there is a sense that the chiefs, ndunas and jumbes already had a society, economy and culture in which they were able to live comfortably, and one can see how the charge of indifference and conservatism from late-colonial officials and some African informants could arise. From a present-day perspective, however, a more plausible analysis would see their response not as passive indifference but passive resistance to unwelcome interventions that threatened to interfere with established practices for sustaining their livelihoods, privileges, and the respect

³⁷ The word used to describe this process was *mwamko*, literally ‘an awakening’, but see discussion below.

of the commoner population. Their foot-dragging, non-attendance, absenteeism, partial hearing, and so on, are the classic tactics of 'subaltern' groups and individuals trying actively to control their lives in the face of domination (Scott, 1990). Yet the construction of Ngoni conservatism persisted in post-colonial popular consciousness.

The 'Barongo Campaign', 1965-67

Conversations with elders in Songea District about the history of tobacco production soon encounter the name 'Barongo'. In 1964 a bylaw was established by Songea District Council to enforce the production of tobacco. Every adult citizen was required to grow two acres, and failure meant a fine of 200 shillings or two months imprisonment. As the newly appointed Ruvuma Regional Commissioner in 1965, Edward Barongo took the opportunity created by this bylaw to make his name as a formidable champion of development. His subordinates travelled to the villages, armed with lists of local taxpayers, to coerce the reluctant and now fearful population into tobacco production. While of course these actions are reminiscent of early 1950s tie-ridging and food crop campaigns, it is perhaps surprising that the official discourse surrounding this post-independence campaign also had continuities with the past. Barongo was a Haya from Bukoba and thus separated from local ethnic politics. Furthermore, Nyerere's nationalism offered no opportunity for the political expression of ethnic or religious sentiments. Nevertheless, to Barongo and other Africans there were (and still are) fundamental differences in character between ethnic groups in Songea, and the reason the Ngoni failed to grow tobacco was that they were lazy, stubborn and conservative.

The Ngoni in central Njelu became the focus of his campaign, and they responded by hiding in the forest while his agents were at work. One prominent figure who had retired from the Songea tobacco industry recalled how Barongo used to punish the Ngoni for not growing tobacco:

He would first fine them, then jail them for two months, or get them to do a job such as work on the roads, and pay them two shillings a day. So many Ngonis were jailed that it exhausted the Council's budget that year. So he came up with the idea of taking the Ngoni offenders to Undendeuli for one month where they were forced to work on Undendeuli farms as free labour – they were fed and accommodated by their 'hosts'. This was good for the Council because it was free, but very bad for the proud Ngoni. The Ngoni, then and now, usually look down on the Ndendeuli as inferior – but it is just boastful behaviour – there is no reason for them to feel superior. This act was shaming for the proud Ngoni, but it increased the urge to grow more tobacco amongst the Ngoni. Thus between 1965 and '67 tobacco production shot up very high (Lukas Ngonyani, 27/5/00, Songea town).

The Songea District Commissioner in 1967 recalled how, on his arrival to his new posting, Barongo said to him: “There is only one job we have here – to make sure tobacco is grown. This is an instruction from the President”. He explained that production had fallen to nearly 200 tonnes, and if efforts were not made, the only factory in Songea would close down (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town). Few farmers realised that Barongo is also credited with successfully lobbying the Government to have the price of tobacco raised. Despite appearances, then, this campaign was not an expression of ethnic politics, but developmentalism – a battle against conservatism and tradition rather than the Ngoni *per se*. Behind this discourse lay strong career ambitions, and a hubristic belief in the power of the state to deliver development to a backward group – whether that group be a tribe, a region or adherents of a religion. Ngonyani recalled:

He was not against the Ngoni – he just wanted to increase production. Barongo saw the Ngoni as ‘lazy drunkards’ and he said he will ban *ulanzi* [millet beer] production – put poison ‘acid’ in the bamboo plants because it stopped you from producing tobacco. They had to hide when they drank it. [...] Ngoni paid the least amount of taxes, so he concentrated on them. But later on they liked him because he increased production of tobacco and made them wealthier. They appreciated the fact that he had made them work harder. Barongo would claim that all local money was really a result of his efforts to increase production of tobacco so he would refer to money as ‘Barongos’ and this caught on among the farmers. [...] Barongo really believed what he said, that he had built up the region (Lukas Ngonyani, 27/5/00, Songea town).

Stories of spending ‘Barongos’ in the 1960s were common among tobacco farmers, delivered with irony, and a range of feelings about the desirability of his approach and achievements. A former Primary Society Chairman explained, reflecting the views of many: “The Ngoni don’t like Barongo because he was forcing them to grow. Most wouldn’t grow, and it was hard to hide in the bush. And he was threatening to use bulldozers to uproot their bamboo plants. So the Ngoni don’t speak well of him – because he was not actually educating them, but forcing them” (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo). It seems that Nduna Beno’s campaign in Mpitimbi under colonial rule was appreciated more than Barongo’s twenty years later. Kumburu remarked that, “Beno was giving more training and inputs than Barongo, who was causing people to run into the bush to hide” (Ali Swalei ‘A’ and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). When Daniel Gama, grandson of Nkosi Usangila, was asked whether he remembered Barongo, he recalled: “I escaped to Dar es Salaam to avoid him! [...] Only the elders remained” (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni). Of the several interlinked reasons for the Njelu population failing to grow tobacco, Gama mentioned that it was partly because the Ndendeuli “started by themselves and not by force. They know the profit in cultivating it –

they know because they started of their own accord” (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni). But these are criticisms of Barongos over-zealous approach rather than his analysis of Ngoni conservatism as the barrier to development.

Politics of Tobacco Marketing, 1961-2002

Barongo’s efforts can also be seen in the light of increased politicisation of the Cooperative Union. Local informants describe how the Union and its primary societies functioned well during the 1950s, but the cooperative movement in the country as a whole played a crucial part in TANU’s success, so that after Independence “you couldn’t have a cooperative union that was not led by a politician. [...] Every politician wanted to be famous by influencing the cooperatives. And that is why when Barongo comes to Ruvuma he discovers that the only way he can become famous was to deal with [influence] tobacco” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 28/4/00, Peramiho). After the implementation of the Villagisation Programme in the mid-1970s, “Politicians came up with the idea that spontaneous membership of cooperative societies should now be compulsory. Each village should become a cooperative society. This move was the practical death of the cooperative movement. Everything was controlled by government at all levels, rather than by the cooperatives” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 28/4/00, Peramiho). Voluntary membership was reintroduced in the mid-1980s, but it was too late: “But still the Government’s hand was strong and they were the ones running it actually. The Cooperative Department at district and regional and even national level became very corrupt. [...] The politicians kept control and demanded money from the cooperatives if they wanted it. It has been like that since” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 28/4/00, Peramiho).

According to tobacco growers in Maposeni in central Njelu, major management problems within their primary society, Silipema (which includes growers in Sinai, Likuyu Fusi, Peramiho and Maposeni) began around 1984 and have never been fully resolved. Indeed we have already seen how the management of its predecessor, Ndirima Primary Society, was struggling in the 1940s. New leaders were elected in May 2002, and the numbers of tobacco farmers doubled to 32 in that year. In 1995, a new Union Chairman broke an existing arrangement whereby the Union allocated equal proportions of the entire crop, processed by the Union at the Songea factory, to the small number of private companies who exported the processed tobacco overseas. With just one company now receiving some 80 percent of the crop, their rivals made use of prevailing shifts in national policy towards liberalisation to bypass the Union and buy direct from the farmers. A damaging “game of tug and war” ensued between the companies, united under a single agency, and the Union, which came under the powerful influence of the Regional Commissioner. By all accounts the losers were the

farmers throughout the District, among whom a considerable number were still awaiting payments for their 2000 harvest by the end of 2002 (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni; Ntimbanjaye Millinga, Peramiho, 28/4/00).

Agroecological and Technical Issues

Building on Gulliver's analysis, a useful distinction can be made between the inherent qualities of the soil and environment on the one hand, and their alteration by 150 years of agriculture and habitation. Local judgements of farmers, extension officers and public servants all claimed that there were no significant overall difference in the quality of soils to the east and west of the District that might influence the cultivation of tobacco, although local variations were common.³⁸ Rainfall and temperature regimes are also similar on either side. However, central Njelu has been settled for much longer than Undendeuli, with a higher population density. This has reduced the availability of both fertile land, and fuelwood, to those living in the very centre of Njelu, such as Peramiho which is now becoming a small town of some 10,000 inhabitants. Yet even in Peramiho those who wish to grow tobacco have moved the short distance to their village boundary where land and forest are still available, although social constraints limit access to some extent (Lukas Ngonyani, 27/5/00, Songea town). I asked a retired Agricultural Field Officer who had worked throughout the District whether it was possible that they cannot grow tobacco in Maposeni, central Njelu, due to a longer history of habitation. His reply was clear: "No! In Ungoni, the soils are very suitable for tobacco! There's no difference [...] There is no problem growing tobacco here! There will be a big difference between what farmers say and the Bwana Shamba [Field Officer]!" (Swithurn Chiapo, 20/6/02, Maposeni). One might suggest that the "big difference" came about because Field Officers were failing to listen to their farmers, but his point was that Ngoni do not plant tobacco because they are lazy. He continued: "You can't do it if you are lazy. It is very complicated work..." (Swithurn Chiapo, 20/6/02, Maposeni). When I asked Daniel Gama of Maposeni whether the local soils were suitable for tobacco production, even he replied without hesitation that they were absolutely fine; you could definitely grow tobacco in Maposeni. But its cultivation normally required fertilisers and now there were no loans available to purchase them, and without fertiliser it is better to grow maize (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni).

³⁸ The most important exception is the sandy Gumbiro area, former seat of Nkosi Mbonani, which goes a long way towards explaining the historical lack of interest in tobacco there, beyond the initial enthusiasm of the early 1930s.

Throughout the District the uptake of tobacco increased with the availability of fertiliser, since it was introduced in the mid-1950s, at first for free, but from the 1960s it was given on loan to be repaid out of tobacco incomes. Fertilisers were plentiful from the mid-1970s to mid-1990s when they were heavily subsidised, and also loans were freely available throughout the Union. As a result, some farmers used it all for maize and a large proportion of the loans were not paid back, with little comeback possible on the part of the Union (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). If woodland is being cleared for new tobacco farms, the fertiliser requirement diminishes considerably, and this is certainly part of the reason so few people grow tobacco close to the village centres. It is a crop of the periphery: the peripheries of villages, including Maposeni where it is found two or three miles from the village centre, and the peripheries of the District, of which Undendeuli itself is the striking example. Following Von Thünen's theory of rural settlement structure, tobacco is a crop that tends to occupy the outer concentric ring of a nucleated settlement (Geist pers. comm.). Compared to all other crops which are grown in the *miombo* woodland regions of Africa, tobacco is more demanding on natural resources, rapidly depleting soil fertility, and in particular the fire-cured varieties which require much fuelwood for curing the leaves (Geist 1999a, 2000). But rather than being simply suited to regions with a low density of population, tobacco is a crop that is conducive to a mobile population. A greater proportion of the population in Undendeuli has historically been willing and able to relocate regularly and open new farms on the fringes of the forest. I asked Ngonyani, who had worked as an Agricultural Field Officer in Undendeuli in the 1950s why they had adopted tobacco there so readily at that time, and he replied: "One straight answer is that there was virgin land and thick forest and you could get a good yield of tobacco for five years after the initial land clearance" (Lukas Ngonyani, 11/11/00, Songea town).

However, Ngonyani added that soil fertility was not the only explanation: "There is good land around Njelu but the establishment for tobacco marketing was not firm. The primary societies are more established in Undendeuli than in the west. And you must have a primary society to sell tobacco", which brings us back to the issue of the 'weaker' societies in the west (Lukas Ngonyani, 11/11/00). When asked why the societies were stronger in the east, the discussion shifted to cultural explanations:

The people around Njelu are naturally lazy. Hundreds were selected to hang around the Chief in Maposeni (and Gumbiro) to do nothing, just wait for food, and laziness developed. The land is quite OK. There are red soils just like Undendeuli and unless you have had repeated cultivation of maize you can still get good tobacco. But there are many more primary societies in Undendeuli for marketing (Lukas Ngonyani, 11/11/00, Songea town).

We have already seen how tobacco cultivation and curing are complex processes requiring full commitment through much of the year. There are numerous technical, social, economic and cultural factors which make it more successful when it is done as part of a wider community of committed growers. The skills required to produce top grade leaf are daunting. Harvesting of leaves is carried out in three stages, with ten-day intervals between each stage, requiring the farmer to live nearby to check progress of the crop. After harvesting, the green leaves are bulked for up to seven days to turn a certain shade of yellow before they are cured with firewood from certain species of tree in curing barns, a process requiring care and experience to prevent the crop from damage or ruin. Staggered harvests allow curing in successive stages. Staggering planting, with three transplants at two-week intervals, avoids the risk of over-ripening and a devastating disease attack. Fertiliser inputs must be precise to ensure the correct ‘kick-up’. Furthermore, tobacco should be grown as part of a longer-term rotation with other crops to ensure adequate soil fertility and to prevent the build-up of root diseases in the soil. Treatment to protect against disease must begin in the nursery; indeed teaching of nursery practice is the main task of extension staff, and real improvements are possible through enforced practice (Lukas Ngonyani, 17/5/00, Songea town).

We can begin to understand just why tobacco requires considerable commitment, and why many Native Authorities were simply not interested. I often heard the phrase “learning to cultivate tobacco”, and asked an old tobacco grower how long it took:

It takes two years to learn how to grow it. But to know it well – to be expert – you never complete your training! [...] Everyone knows how to grow maize... but there is no ‘technician of tobacco’ – even if you have cultivated it for many years they go and grade it ‘4’ in the market! Even the graders get it wrong. [...] The Ndendeuli grow 5-6 acres... you have to be used to it... and you have to be committed (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni).

Again we see the commitment required, and a hint of how a community of expert tobacco growers would feel pride in their chosen livelihood. I asked him to confirm that tobacco demanded commitment: “Absolutely true!” said Satu, “You can not travel around! You cannot be ill either. On the day of your sickness – it will be destroyed! Every moment must be for work – if you lose one hour you may spoil all the tobacco”. On the whole, tobacco is planted, harvested and cured increasingly on an individual or household basis, since the work requires close personal attention, although preparing the fields is still carried out cooperatively. Nevertheless, I asked whether it was easier to produce tobacco in a village where many other people are growing it – to help each other – and they explained that this was the case: “You collect 10 farmers together; and say ‘we will help Mr David today

because he is ill'. Or 'Mr David has been ill for three days now, his crop needs harvesting or pruning – we should help him'" (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni).

An additional technical point is that rotation of tobacco with maize, rice and other crops creates a synergistic effect, with the fertiliser residues and burnt material from the tobacco harvest improving subsequent yields. Again, full commitment to agriculture in Undendeuli produces benefits that cannot be realised through casual combinations of agriculture and off-farm sources of income (Lukas Ngonyani, 11/11/00 Songea town; Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 18/11/00, Peramiho; Ester Ndomba, 20/11/00, Peramiho). In many ways the opposite of tobacco in terms of agronomy is cassava, and, not entirely by coincidence, cassava is a cash crop throughout west-central Njelu (see Maps 11 to 14). It is transported by bicycle from villages such as Mbinga Mharule to Songea town for cooking whole, rather than as flour. Other crops in Songea have skewed distributions that can be explained largely in terms of ecology. Beans thrive on the particularly good soils of Mgazini in north-central Njelu. Likewise coffee requires the cool, fertile highlands of Ubena to the north, and by contrast cashew needs the sandy soils and warmer climate of southern Sasawala in the south-east. But there is no strong ecological reason why cassava should not be grown elsewhere within the same wide radius of Songea town (Francis Tindwa, 27/11/00, Songea town). However, the crop happens to be ideal for a diverse livelihood strategy: it can be harvested at any time over a period of years and requires no other intervention, and for this reason has been described as the "lazy mans' crop". It appears likely that its emergence in Njelu is linked to its full compatibility with labour migration and off-farm employment.

Economy and Culture in Ungoni and Undendeuli

Views from Below in Central Njelu

Older educated Africans in Songea District who have been involved in public affairs often focus their understandings of the divergent economies in east and west on the missionaries, frequently expressing the interlinked nature of both economic and cultural impact. A representative statement ran as follows: "Ungoni was dominated by missionaries and lots went to school. Therefore, I think different ideas were developing on how to maintain a good life. The Ngoni realised that tobacco was not the only way. In Undendeuli they had nothing else except tobacco. That was the only activity that they could have. In Ungoni, people more like me wanted to try other things, and efforts in tobacco were reducing" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 28/4/00, Peramiho). Perhaps the most significant economic impact of the missions

was the opportunities for work and training in construction, as explained by one elder retired from local public affairs. Again he linked it to norms about livelihood choices:

The Ngoni had a lot of work to do with the missionaries – building mission buildings... The missionaries would give them assistance. So they were satisfied – they didn't need to cultivate tobacco. There was only one mission centre in Undendeuli – at Namabengo. Because the Ndendeuli didn't have that opportunity, they took tobacco as their main crop, and up to now it is a culture that the Ndendeuli have made – tobacco is part of their culture (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

One further example also linked the impact of the mission on economy and culture. Regarding the Ngoni in central Njelu, I was told:

You employ your small resources in a better way... also you copy from the Peramiho people... It is a sensitive issue, but I've got the reason behind it – the Christian missionaries came with a package – education and religion and for example a trade – carpentry, masonry, and so on... For the Muslims, the package was mainly religion... but also trade. There was no trade in Christianity... So there is a gap in education. It is a historical problem, you can say – its not easy to fill the gap (Francis Tindwa, 18/6/02, Songea town).

Ali Swalei 'A' grew up in Rwinga, near Namtumbo, and came to Magima, central Njelu, in 1969 because his wife was being treated at the Benedictine-run leprosarium in neighbouring Morogoro village. Soon after arriving in Magima he started growing tobacco. He explained how his new neighbours were not interested, and how he acted as an informal extension agent: "When they saw me growing tobacco successfully they came to learn how to do it. I explained the whole procedure. I explained that you should plant the whole crop early in the season to get the top grade" (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). I asked him why the Ndendeuli grow it but not the Ngoni. His companion, Germanus Kumburu, originally from Mpitimbi in south-central Njelu, replied that it was just not their behaviour:

The Ngoni were just not interested. It was not important to them. [...] They knew the Undendeuli were making a lot of money. But still they wouldn't grow it. Maybe because it is hard work and the Ngoni don't like to do the hard work involved in cultivating tobacco. [...] By character they are stubborn. They don't want to do hard work (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima).

So common was this perspective, from Ngoni and Ndendeuli alike, that one is forced to conclude that differences in soils and economy are simply not enough to account for local

perceptions. The discussion soon returned to the same point: Ungoni and Undendeuli have had the same extension service and the same structures of the Cooperative Union; the Ngoni saw that the Ndendeuli were benefiting from tobacco and that it was profitable, but they didn't accept the hard work (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). By contrast, Swalei described the situation in Rwinga in the 1960s, and the central role of tobacco in people's lives: "In Rwinga the atmosphere was that everyone was talking and doing tobacco, including even the school children who thought that the best thing to do in the vacation was to grow tobacco" (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). Importantly, however, Ndendeuli farmers were committed not just to tobacco, but to the full potential of a farming livelihood:

The movement was that the people in Undendeuli were talking of having different sources of money – maize, bananas, simsim – so if any one fails they can benefit from other sources of money. So there was this 'urge' among them – that a good Ndendeuli is one who has several means of making an income. They had a sort of pride – a good Ndendeuli should not be broke – there would be shame from not having money. So there was hard work with all crops – a mixture – including sugar cane. [...] In Undendeuli they were busy throughout the year with work; in Ungoni a lot of time was spent drinking (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima).

I asked Swalei "Which did you prefer? The hard work and money, or the relaxing and drinking you describe in Ungoni?" and his reply was clear: "Life here is better! Because money comes from the missionaries – you don't have to work! One of the reasons I settled here was because of the hospital. In Rwinga there was no hospital, and my wife had leprosy which is why I came in the first place" (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima). It seems that the availability of education was not important to his favourable judgement of Njelu. At this point a colleague asked Swalei whether they were growing tobacco in Undendeuli "because they deliberately wanted to identify themselves as an independent society, different from Ngoni, even better?" Swalei replied enthusiastically: "Exactly that. Even to this day they like to make it known that 'tobacco' equals 'Ndendeuli'" (Ali Swalei 'A' and Germanus Kumburu, 10/7/01, Magima).³⁹ It is this sense of pride from making a good living from the land, especially from tobacco – 'their' crop – that appears to lie at the heart of tobacco production in the east.

After introducing my research interest in the uptake of tobacco to two elder brothers who had farmed tobacco for thirty years in nearby Litisha, the immediate response was: "The Ngoni are stubborn! Even in the Maji Maji war they were too stubborn to realise they were

fighting with spears against guns! They are difficult to change” (Alois and Augustin Haule Egit, 12/7/01, Litisha). The older brother, Alois, was born in 1922 at Kigonsera, and called himself Pangwa (i.e. Ngoni *sutu*). The family moved to Litisha in 1933 when his father required treatment at the Leprosarium. Alois first started growing tobacco during Barongo’s campaign in the late 1960s. An elder Pangwa neighbour saw them running away from Barongo’s agents to hide in the hills and forest, and said: “Why are you running away? Why don’t you just grow tobacco and get some peace?” He taught Alois and others how to produce tobacco, and they have done so ever since. We see here how Barongo’s campaign achieved success: farmers were not being taught how to grow tobacco; they were forced to take the initiative and learn from those few locals who already knew. The reason they continued after Barongo had gone was partly because of the increased availability of cheap fertilisers, but, as elsewhere, enthusiasm declined when subsidies and loans were removed, and marketing became inefficient and corrupt (Alois and Augustin Haule Egit, 12/7/01, Litisha).

Views from Maposeni: the Njelu Metropole

Comparing Maposeni, home of successive Njelu nkosis, with a village in Undendeuli, say Nambecha, today, there is not a striking difference in the degree of economic stratification which might account for the different attitudes to tobacco. A description of the six wealthiest households in Maposeni revealed a typical profile of some 10 acres under cultivation of mainly maize and perhaps a small amount of cash crop such as tobacco or sugarcane, five cows or pigs, ten goats, a bicycle, possibly a motorbike, possibly a pension, and enough capital to speculate on crop prices and deal locally in modest quantities of fertilisers. In Nambecha many households were cultivating eight acres of which typically four acres were tobacco. The wealthiest households were cultivating up to a total of 20 acres, and goats considerably outnumber other forms of livestock. There are possibly fewer households receiving a pension. Such households will often have large polygamous families, with greater labour availability, as discussed below (Shaibu Kuyuyila, WEO, 23/6/02, Maposeni; Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). Maposeni residents could generate substantial incomes from tobacco if they were to try – and this is how successive generations of administrators and Agricultural Field Officers have labelled them lazy.

An exception that proved the rule was a young Ndendeuli immigrant from Kitanda who settled in Maposeni in 2000 with his wife. In 2002, he produced the greatest quantity of tobacco in the village, generating an income of Tsh 600,000 from a plot of approximately 1.5

³⁹ Similarly, the local Agricultural Extension Officer declared of the Ndendeuli: “Tobacco is in their

acres on the edge of the large tracts of intact woodland that remain in Maposeni, and indeed nearly all Njelu villages. He aimed to make Tsh 1,000,000 from three acres in the coming season – a considerable sum – with the help of just one paid labourer, but intended to complete the task with just his brother's help. His single wife ran a grocery in the village. Access to the land required payment of Tsh 3000 per acre to the Village Government and did not require permission from any customary landholder. From an economic perspective, this was a project that many households could have attempted (Siamini Mbawala, 25/6/02, Maposeni).⁴⁰ This example shows clearly how knowledge of and familiarity with the crop is so important to its uptake – a factor that can override the significance of soil fertility in Maposeni and elsewhere in Njelu.

Otmar Satu was an elderly farmer who had chosen to relocate in 1987 with some of his family to a basic grass-roofed hut two miles north of Maposeni village centre, but within the village boundary. These were serious tobacco farmers: “We have transferred from the village to here because we do not want to waste time walking back and forth every day. We want to wake up in the morning and straight away start working! So we decided to live out here.” A small scattered settlement of ten tobacco farming families had developed around his homestead, a combination of people from Maposeni and neighbouring Ndunduwalu, all of whom had lived in that specific area before Villagisation. The average production per household within the group was approximately six acres including one acre of tobacco and perhaps two of maize. Satu himself had a total of ten acres under cultivation, normally with 1.5 acres of tobacco although this year the marketing difficulties had caused him to produce just half an acre. Another personal reason for the move had been that his neighbours no longer tolerated his sixteen cows: “Out here... If goats wander into a certain field, we understand each other”. He was the first of this emerging community to return to that area and was regarded the ‘leader’ if problems arose (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). He asserted that he had customary rights to some 4000 acres of land, a claim not uncommon to well-established elders in Njelu, but which is normally overridden by village governments, as discussed in Chapter Six. Others who might want to join them would be accepted and allocated rights to use land. He brought home the advantages of space to efficient agricultural practice: “You are free here! We can decide to leave a patch of land after tobacco production over there and grow cassava – or to move house over there to another spot. You can't do that

backbone” (Ester Ndomba, 20/11/00, Peramiho).

⁴⁰ The second highest producer was also an outsider from the Lake Shore, who made Tsh 300,000 from one acre. He was also a village government clerk. An Agricultural Field Officer who was accompanying me remarked, when hearing this: “And he is a government worker! Imagine what a [full-time] farmer could do.” The third highest producer was a local resident (Siamini Mbawala, 25/6/02, Maposeni).

in the village – there’s not enough land” (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). And he is referring to a location just two miles from the village centre, an area that might appear restrictive to the Ndendeuli. Here we see the frontier-metropole dynamic explored in this thesis played out on a very different spatial scale.

Satu was born in 1925 two miles from his present location. He recalled that tobacco production began in the area in 1930, although his father started in 1946. Regarding the attitudes of his family to the introduction of tobacco, he said: “We were very happy to grow it – and to depend on it – as it meant we didn’t need to move to Dar es Salaam or Kilosa to get work”. Each adult grew one acre, yielding approximately 200 shillings, which was a substantial amount: “If you got even 200 shillings you were a ‘person’! With just one cent you could buy something” (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). Such evidence of the attractiveness of tobacco production in Maposeni in the 1940s and 1950s begs the question, why did not everyone grow it? Satu’s reply revealed a new insight:

Tobacco was only cultivated by old men. The youth were employed with carpentry and other skills, travelling to Nyasaland or Dar es Salaam, and so on. That is their habit until today. Boys don’t like growing tobacco – they think it is only for old people. [...] They want to go to the town – for employment as mechanics, or in the Church... Tobacco is very complex to cultivate, and they can’t tolerate working for nine months without getting any money, or even up to one year. A youth wants money now (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni).

His personal employment history was not uncommon among elder Maposeni men. After completing Class Two in 1942, he lived in Songea and learned to build for three years. He mined minerals at Ruanda (in present-day Mbinga District) briefly before returning to Songea town and working for ‘Kaguru’, a well-known European building engineer who constructed government buildings, bridges and roads throughout the District. Under Kaguru there were three African craftsmen, each with between ten and twenty trained subordinates who employed untrained workers and labourers. He worked in Mbamba Bay, Mbinga, Lituhi, and Lusewa before travelling independently to Malawi for employment. In 1953 he returned home to Maposeni. “I started to cultivate tobacco in 1954, and have been growing it since then” (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). He had known beforehand that eventually he would settle down and cultivate tobacco, “because my father had no energy left and I had to help him... Also my mind had matured and my youthful ways had come to an end” (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). It was a common pattern among his contemporaries in the 1950s. “During the rainy season they cultivated at home – maize, cassava and millet. After the harvest they went for employment. Everybody left the village”. I asked for confirmation:

“Didn’t any youth stay in the village?” He and his brother laughed aloud: “What will they wear? Impossible!” replied his brother. Satu estimated that approximately 75 percent left the District for work while 25 percent found work elsewhere in the District. Between 1960 and 1974 the proportion leaving the village decreased, and after Villagisation there was no longer any labour migration. “These days they are even learning to cultivate tobacco” (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni).

In the 1950s, explained my informant in Peramiho, there was a big demand for builders on the coastal belt, and Ngoni craftsmen there would employ fellow Ngoni while Ndendeuli youth would have found it harder to integrate into this pattern: “They accepted people with their language, from their place. They would go in groups of three or five people together. ‘Lets go and get a job’ they would say” (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 26/6/02, Peramiho). Formal training was probably given to 20-30 percent of the male youth in the catchment around Songea town and Peramiho. “But it need not be formal”, he added: “If you are trained at the mission you then would train others. That’s how most of them get training here. To compare it with Undendeuli, there were more skilled youth here than Undendeuli”. I said, “All this seems to show that the Ngoni are not lazy”. He replied, knowingly: “Well – if you take tobacco as the measure of laziness, then they are lazy” (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 26/6/02, Peramiho). These quotes fit well with Gulliver’s conclusions. We learn just how economically attractive labour migration, and local employment, was to the young Njelu population in the 1950s; how tobacco production, among other considerations, was inconducive to a pattern of seasonal absence from the community, and how some knew that they would be returning to cultivate tobacco as old men.

I asked Daniel Gama of Maposeni why people do not grow tobacco in his village, and other parts of Njelu. His explanation was very clear: “Here, and in Likuyu Fusi and Parangu we were working with the missionaries – as carpenters, craftsmen, and the like. Because of that technical work we didn’t want to grow tobacco. [...] I was a mason trained by and working for the missionaries. I built the *baraza* [government court in Maposeni] in 1947) – we got a salary of 25 shillings per month. In the 1960s we got 60 shillings per month as craftsmen” (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni). This is a significant sum of money, comparable with a modest level of tobacco production. He asserted that nearly all the Maposeni male population worked in Peramiho, while another informant, Vincent Mpepo, estimated that today the proportion of men working in Peramiho was fifty percent. This was the only reason for not growing tobacco, he said. These descendants of the former Ngoni ruling families did not chose to mention ‘stubbornness’ or ‘laziness’ (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni). Stubborn or not, these perspectives demonstrate beyond doubt that the training and employment opportunities provided in Peramiho and Songea town during late-colonial

rule were enough to attract the youth of Maposeni away from tobacco, at least until they were old men.

The Ndendeuli 'Cultural Project' of Tobacco

We have seen that explanations given by local informants for the differential uptake of tobacco were often variants on the theme of perceived differences in ethnic culture. Ndendeuli informants often added a political edge to their remarks: “The short explanation as I understand it is that the Ndendeuli people do not fear working and they do that without being forced. [...] The Ngoni’s are historically known as leaders of this region, and we are the producers and food crops” (Husseini Mang’unyuka, 26/7/01, Namtumbo). Similarly, we hear of the Ndendeuli: “The reason is that right from the beginning they took it seriously, but the Ngoni didn’t take it seriously because they were drinking *ulanzi*” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). A version on Ngoni stubbornness ran as follows: “The Ndendeuli have always been recipients of orders – they grew tobacco because an order has got to be fulfilled... But for the Ngoni, it is not their way – they defy authorities” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Amiri Hinduka, with no irony, said there were two reasons why Ngoni didn’t grow tobacco. Firstly they were the rulers, and secondly they had brought the knowledge of *ulanzi* production from their Pangwa captives. As a result: “It is *pombe* in the dry season and *ulanzi* in the rainy season. They have no time to work. And that remains the situation to this date (Amiri Hinduka, 28/7/01, Suluti).

Economic difference, directly or indirectly linked to the missions, was of undeniable importance in the uptake of tobacco, as indicated by Ali Swalei, who insisted that a primary factor for its uptake in Undendeuli was that it reduced the need to travel to the coast to sell beeswax and rice (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town). The greater significance of beeswax to the pre-tobacco economy of Undendeuli was brought home by Mustafa Fukara who recalled its importance in Mtimbira, a small settlement in the north-east corner of Undendeuli, at the time of his birth in 1937: “Every mature person over 20 years old was collecting this. It was their ‘cash crop’, because they didn’t have another cash crop”. Beeswax was being transported and sold to an Indian trader based in Matimanga, near Tunduru, who sold it on to Lindi. Apart from individuals portering their own produce, he recalled that three buyers handled the trade in Mtimbira – one local and two other Ndendeuli men from Namtumbo (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

In 1937 tobacco had already been introduced to Mtimbira, and there were two or three people growing the crop, the first being Ramadhani Chapuchapu. Fukara recalled how he was a little wealthier than other men, and one of those who collected and traded beeswax

to Matimanga. He used this revenue to market his tobacco to Gumbiro with local porters. Importantly, the labour requirements of tobacco production and marketing benefited from access to labour, and this was conducive to polygamy, sanctioned by Islam which was being introduced in Matimira at the same time (see Chapter Four). Chapuchapu had two wives, while the first to follow Chapuchapu's example were Hamisi Mtamayayi who had three wives, Salum Magwati, and Mselemu Muheramino. The last of these had just one wife, "But he was a very hardworking man – if he wanted something, it must be done". After the population of Mtimbira was relocated to Nambecha in the 1940s (see Chapter Six) this man had the biggest farm in the village. "He had a certain attitude of competition for development, but he was a 'average person', his job was just growing tobacco – we respected him because of his tobacco growing" (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

Many informants noted the significance of polygamy to successful tobacco production (Joyce Paul and Rabia Gunda, 22/5/00, Namtumbo). For example, one explained: "Another big factor, which people don't talk much about, is the marriage system. Undendeuli is predominantly Muslim. The Muslims can marry up to four wives and some are still living a traditional way with 7-10 wives. They are the labourers. ...even the Christians living in Undendeuli have picked up the behaviour of their neighbours and have more than one wife. The Christians in the west may have several concubines but they can't be used as labourers. This is one of the biggest contributing factors... If you only have one wife you cannot work with tobacco" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, Peramiho, 28/4/00). While the link between polygamy and tobacco is clear in present-day Undendeuli, Fukara's recollections cited above give us an insight into the question of which came first – tobacco or polygamy. One informant argued that historically Undendeuli families must have been much smaller since large families required resources which did not exist at that time: "You can't have so many wives with no money – you will be bankrupt. Maybe only two wives – but 10 wives! That is only possible if you get money" (Swithurn Chiapo, 30/6/02, Namtumbo). Fukara estimated that in Mtimbira in 1937 the majority of households consisted of men with one wife, although some had two. Men only had as many as three wives if they pursued special functions or activities, such as traditional healers, wanyapara (the lowest level of the government hierarchy and responsible for tax collection), or agents in the beeswax trade. It certainly helped to have two or three wives if you wanted to start growing tobacco:

You needed big families even then. These days people grow tobacco, get money, get another wife, grow more tobacco, and so on. But it was quite different in those days. They married many wives not because of growing tobacco – the tobacco met them with wives. Polygamy was the source of the

capital needed to start growing tobacco. Anyone with a large family could start growing (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

Polygamy predated tobacco. However, the increase in tobacco supported the parallel increase in the incidence of polygamy, and this process was linked to tax collection. Since the household head was responsible for paying the tax for the entire household, if he had many people to support he would start growing tobacco, and encourage his adherents to do the same. The outcome was the emergence of large polygamous households headed by patriarchs who supervised the production of tobacco (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

A common view among outsiders is that women are being exploited under this arrangement: “Women are not the owners of the land, they are workers. All crops and land are owned by the man” (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 18/11/00, Peramiho). While more wives clearly meant more labour, it also meant more mouths to feed, and the key insight is that the head of the polygamous household has authority over his entire household which increases his ability to supervise the overall project of becoming a successful Ndendeuli, the core of which is tobacco production. What was the advantage of having four or five wives? Did they cooperate? An Agricultural Field Officer gave the most coherent explanation, highlighting the issue of authority and supervision:

They don't cooperate. Everyone – every wife and some of the children – has their place to farm their own acre; and I have my place [as the head of the household]. Everyone does all their own operations themselves, separately. But the supervision is done by me. I keep my one acre nearby – so that if one person doesn't cultivate, we should know why – are they lazy, or ill? Also there is a certain competition to work. Each one feels that I must finish before that one! If one of them is lazy, they will tell the 'supervisor' – and they will tell the lazy one as well. They will say 'you are lazy! You are bringing shame to the family.' People will visit and look, and may say 'Ah – they are just playing! They are not doing work!' So if you keep them together, there is a certain competition, and easy supervision – because I am the supervisor. If one wife is ill – I can say 'OK' and take the four other wives, with the children, and say to them 'you must help this (one) – because the day will come when you are ill'... so they help each other (Swithurn Chiapo, 2/7/02, Namtumbo).

The pride surrounding successful tobacco production was clearly a powerful motivation. One informant explained: “It is their pride to be known that they grow tobacco. And in some years they get a lot of money. You know, when some people have developed a culture, you are looked down upon if you aren't part of that culture. For them a noble young man is one who has a big tobacco farm – five acres, six acres, and those with more wives, 10, 12 even 15 acres” (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 18/11/00, Peramiho). A 'project' had developed from tobacco

production and polygamy. I was told, “in Mgombasi, when they get their revenue, the money after selling their cash crop, the most interesting thing to have is another wife – not to build a good household – but to get a wife” (Francis Tindwa, 18/6/02, Songea town). A resident of Peramiho explained:

They ask themselves how many wives do you have? And you reply, ‘one’. They say ‘Just one! You can’t get rich like that – you have to have another wife – otherwise you will only be able to grow small plots of tobacco.’ They keep talking about how they produced so many kilos of first grade tobacco. ‘So I married another wife, and bought a bicycle and put iron sheets on my house...’ They look down on the Ngoni – ‘Those lazy bastards’. In that way, the Ndendeuli are very much organized compared to the Ngoni. The Ngoni are more individualistic – they talk about the ‘individual self’ rather than development of the whole area (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 18/11/00, Peramiho).

One might ask where all the wives come from to support this polygamous society. Locals often assert that there are significantly more women than men in the District, and although this might have been the case in the colonial period, it does not hold today. Part of the answer lies in the life-cycle of a household, with men increasing the number of wives throughout their lives so that by the time they have reached old age they may marry girls in their teens, who are then reallocated among male relatives or freed from marriage on the death of their husband. I was told: “The Ndendeuli have wives who are just 15 years old. They will say ‘here is my girlfriend’ about a five year old girl. He pays for her schooling... later he discusses with the parents and when she is older they say ‘Take him! If you give money’. She is not pleased – but she is ordered” (Swithurn Chiapo, 30/6/02, Namtumbo). The issue of exploitation is a moot point. It was the same male informant who noted that:

The wives are feeling that if they don’t farm tobacco they will not have good clothes, or a good house, or a bed to sleep. If no tobacco is grown they will not have any money. Wives say this – they know it. If a husband doesn’t grow tobacco, the wife will complain to his parents ‘my husband doesn’t grow tobacco!’ They will say ‘He doesn’t? Leave him!’ And they say to their son, ‘Take your wife – you should grow tobacco!’ (Swithurn Chiapo, 30/6/02, Namtumbo).

Although not likely to be the view of all married Ndendeuli women, this perspective is consistent with the sense that both genders, and indeed all ages, have a stake in this construction of the successful Ndendeuli household. Of course there is much variation in gender relations between households and I was told how some, but not all, Ndendeuli men distribute their income from tobacco equitably among their wives. There was also much variation in the economic organisation of production. Some men say, “I have six wives – one

for Monday, one for Tuesday...” Other men may have six wives, and each is allocated a farm on which they cultivate an acre of tobacco as well as food crops largely by themselves, while the husband would have his own farm. In this scenario he would normally retain close supervision over the whole enterprise, and partly because he is responsible for marketing he would control the money, allocating funds to each wife, perhaps Tsh 10,000, whenever he feels it is appropriate. The rest is stored in a safe place (Swithurn Chiapo, 30/6/02, Namtumbo; Joyce Paul, 22/5/00, Namtumbo).

A fundamental difference between Undendeuli and the Maposeni tobacco growers described above concerns the participation of the youth. In Mgombasi I was told: “The children grow up here cultivating it. They know, ‘Where can I get money? Only from tobacco!’” (Swithurn Chiapo, 2/7/02, Namtumbo). To make the point, at the village primary school I was introduced to a number of children who had already begun to cultivate their own tobacco. The youngest was ten years old, born in 1992, and attending Class Three. He had started that year to grow ten ridges (a quarter of an acre) and knew well that this would bring him Tsh 10,000 which he intended to use to buy clothes. His parents gave him the required fertilisers, but he was free to decide how to spend the income, an indication of the pride they attached to this youthful enterprise (Bacha Luambano, 1/7/02, Mgombasi).

Attached to the combined ‘project’ of tobacco and polygamous household expansion as the measure of success in Ndendeuli society, informants described a certain attitude to spending in general, which was seen by many outsiders to be a problem emanating from a lack of education. I was often told that the Ndendeuli do not know how to spend their profits. Rather than investing in impressive houses, or education for their children, Ndendeuli men were seen to invest only in wives. One informant saw it as the responsibility of government to change this non-developmental attitude: “The Government has allowed the people to use their money extravagantly. They should try and help them use their money in good order. A lot of houses have very good walls but bad roofs... The Government only helped them in tobacco production and marketing, and after the money has come, they [Ndendeuli] are free... If you leave children free with a lot of money – they don’t know how to use it” (Swithurn Chiapo, 2/7/02, Namtumbo). By contrast he described the situation in Peramiho: “They have learnt from the missionaries... And approximately all the people are builders – how can he neglect his home when he himself is a master?” (Swithurn Chiapo, 2/7/02, Namtumbo). Once again, in the metropolitan view, the frontier lacked modern culture and morality.

Conclusions

The analyses of Africans regarding the divergent economies in the east and west of the District over the last 80 years support the archival evidence of multiple, interlinked factors and processes. However, these are not mutually exclusive, and can be seen to reflect the perspectives of individuals positioned differently within the geography and political economy of the District. Partly for this reason, successive generations of officials have been able to interpret Ngoni economy as evidence of their laziness and conservatism without contradicting the opinions of more generous observers. What is important to conclude from these multiple perspectives is how economic and cultural factors are linked with such frequency, typically in the context of the impact of missionisation. The skewed distribution of tobacco in the District is clearly not just a consequence of greater economic opportunities in the catchment area of Peramiho and Songea town. Divergent economies grew alongside divergent cultures, most strikingly expressed in Undendeuli households where tobacco, polygamy and Islam were mutually-reinforcing, and arguably strengthened further by a shared feeling of proud self-reliance that came from an ability to thrive on this neglected periphery.

Could this argument be extended to the level of Undendeuli society as a whole? In the light of their secession from Ungoni, was it possible that the Ndendeuli excelled in tobacco production as part of a conscious effort to build up their society – politically and economically, to compete with the Ngoni and assert their superiority? Might this have been a material counterpart to the active adoption of Islam, and the alternative morality, society and culture this offered them? This important theme is the subject of Chapter Seven, but to conclude the present chapter we can note the opinion of the MP for Undendeuli regarding the significance of “Ndendeuli-ism” as he called it. He asserted that tobacco production in Undendeuli “was not because we wanted to liberate ourselves. A few individuals may have said that – that I can’t refute – but it was not the general feeling. There were many bicycles! ...bicycles from UK... Every distinguished family had a bicycle. This is what they were interested in – material things” (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam). The notion of ‘society-building’ directed by an elite which plans the emergence of intertwining political, economic and cultural institutions can be rejected. A more plausible way of viewing such a process may be to focus on the efforts of individuals, each pursuing their various projects, whose pride in how they are indirectly contributing to the development of their ‘nation’ helped to create a culture of attitudes and values centred on the production of tobacco.

Settlement Stability and Social Control, 1900-2002

This chapter aims to demonstrate the importance of the social and ecological conditioning of settlement patterns for understanding the dynamics of Ngoni and Ndendeuli relations and their emergence as two distinct societies. I begin by examining a dominant theme in local government interventions since the advent of colonial rule; namely the sustained efforts of successive administrations to intensify the settlement patterns of dispersed populations, a process that was considerably more disruptive in Undendeuli than central Ungoni. While justified through a variety of loosely related objectives, the common aim was to bring rural people under greater government control and influence, and into the modern world of public services. Later sections use interview material to explore the relationship between settlement stability and political control at the local level, and the idea that Ndendeuli communities historically chose dispersed settlement partly in order to escape unwelcome state interference. Finally we revisit work by Gulliver carried out in Undendeuli at the time of their secession from Ngoni rule, and discover how one particular community came to embrace economic development and its consequent incorporation into the state. Is this process best described (following Hyden 1980) as ‘the state capturing the peasantry’, or as an endogenous process which has been actively created by the choices of individual Ndendeuli, but also shaped by the physical, political, sociological and economic conditions in Undendeuli and other frontier regions? An examination of Songea settlement history will take us a step further towards an answer.

Colonial Discourses of Closer Settlement

One of the themes running through the history of Songea District is the repeated effort by successive administrations to transform the pattern of a scattered population into one of stable, nucleated settlements, of which the nation-wide programme of Villagisation in the mid-1970s was just the most recent, but also the most controversial. All of these programmes have had considerably more impact on the Ndendeuli than the Ngoni. They have been justified in diverse ways, and one is left with the impression that the means of justification – whether it be tsetse control, provision of schools, soil erosion control, provision of agricultural extension – is secondary to a more fundamental, often unquestioned, goal of simplifying and controlling the social and spatial organisation of the rural periphery. Apart from the undeniable advantages of administrative efficiency, creation of villages has a more sinister side in the often unspoken benefits it offers agents of the state to increase the degree of social control exercised over their subjects, collection of hut and poll taxes, and recruitment for war and labour. The latter aims no doubt featured highly among the motives of German officials when, in 1900, they resettled scattered Ndendeuli populations along the old Kilwa road near their new Akida-ate at Likuyu (RH/Mss.Afr.s.585. Story of the Likuyu Area). Also in 1908 inhabitants of the Liger area were resettled on the old caravan route in Mkongo, and Mtungwe as well as Liger itself (Liger Chronicle 1950:225).⁴¹

Often the primary justification for closer settlement schemes during British rule was tsetse control. As elsewhere, the distribution of tsetse fly could be inversely correlated with population density. Thus, tsetse was concentrated in the eastern, northern and southern peripheries of the District and consequently livestock husbandry in these areas has been restricted primarily to goats. Tsetse was absent from central Njelu, but also Umatengo and the Lake Shore where the vast majority of the cattle population in the District was to be found.⁴² Not surprisingly, the peripheries also had the greatest concentration of wildlife – eland, pigs,

⁴¹ These are the only two examples encountered during the German period, but it seems likely that several similar instances of relocation took place both before and after the Maji Maji rising. The fact that both targeted the periphery strengthens the idea that political control and taxation were primary motives.

⁴² Regarding the distribution of cattle, the DO wrote in 1923 how a line could be drawn on a map roughly dividing the District into two. In the half of the District to the west of the Ruvuma River up to its source at Songea and a line running north-north-west from there to the Iringa District boundary there was a total of 9000 cattle and 23,000 goats. The balance of the District to the east of this line had just 358 cattle and 2808 goats. Tsetse was largely absent from the west of this line but present to the east, although, "The Eastern half so divided is by no means over run with fly, large areas being quite free but restricted movement is the difficulty" (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923, pages 14-15).

baboons, lions, hippopotami, elephants – which caused considerable damage to crops throughout the colonial period. In 1953 Gulliver estimated that as much as 20 percent of crop production was lost to game in the Mchomoro area of Undendeuli (Gulliver 1971:45). The administration put the blame on Africans' stubborn preference for living in the bush, prompting the DC to write: "No attention has been paid to complaints by lonely settlers. They have been advised to come into more populous areas" (TNA/1733/15, SDAR 1923, page 23). In the 1920s, efforts to encourage voluntary closer settlement were met with strong resistance (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 19). A third justification for closer settlement in Songea was the powerful perception, encountered in Chapter Three, that higher populations had been sustained in the District before Maji Maji and that German rule had destroyed the Ngoni social system:

One cannot fail to be struck with the signs that at one time this District supported a larger population than it does now. The Maji-maji Rebellion is the prime cause of the decrease in population. If a larger population once obtained a livelihood there is no reason why a much greater area should not be cultivated than is cultivated at present. In short from reports and personal observation, I am convinced that the District of Songea is suited to closer settlement, and that its agricultural possibilities are large (TNA/1733/9:71, SDAR 1924, page 7).

By 1924, closer settlement programmes were being proposed for various parts of Tanganyika, and in the case of Songea its aims also fitted logically into the broader programme, soon to commence under Indirect Rule, of reviving the pre-German Ngoni social order. However, nothing was implemented until after the War.

The first time it was raised as a practical possibility in the Southern Province was in September 1933, during a meeting to discuss the causes of famine. A range of reasons was given:

Concentration is primarily a measure of protection against sleeping sickness, famines, and the ravages of wild beasts, especially elephants. Indeed the problem of elephant control in this area is probably insoluble without some such measure, while the importance from the sleeping sickness point of view has been explained above. Concentration is also necessary on economic grounds, for experience shows that scattered and sparse bush populations cannot maintain themselves. It is their present mode of life which creates conditions so precarious as to lead to frequent food crises, and the obligation to persuade them to alter that mode of life is one that Government must assume (TNA/SEC/21695, PC, Kitching, to CS, 18/4/34).

It so happened that the Provincial Commissioner, Kitching, was unusually sensitive to the dangers of ill-informed interventions in African settlement patterns, asserting, for example,

that: "Concentrations cannot add an inch to the rainfall and the fact must be faced that famines will recur in the future whenever there is a failure of rain, whether we concentrate or not" (TNA/SEC/21695, PC, Kitching, to CS, 18/4/34). Following a careful analysis of the multiple and at times conflicting objectives he asserted that resettlement should not be justified by vague ideas of economic and administrative efficiency for its own sake. The only legitimate aim was tsetse control, and indeed this was reason enough, with reports coming in of devastating epidemics in the west of the country. His proposals were to start with Masasi and Tunduru, which had the most dispersed settlement patterns and greatest need, and later to extend to Mikindani, Newala and Songea.

Closer Settlement in Undendeuli, 1944-48

When the first resettlement programme was implemented in Songea District from 1944, contestation over motives was demonstrated again. The settlements to be relocated were scattered along the old Songea-Liwale road in north-east Undendeuli, close to the sites where the Germans relocated them at the turn of the century, ostensibly because the Selous Game Reserve was to be extended. A District Officer, Tubbs, was sent off to investigate the area, and he reported back on local responses to the plan:

While quite prepared to submit to any Government order about moving, they are most upset at the idea of leaving their fertile valleys, their few coconut trees and the numerous mango trees. On the other hand they are certainly remote, now that the road is no longer used (four days to the nearest shops at Namtumbo or Matemanga and three days from their Court) and the country teems with elephant. They have an elephant complex, it is a case of elephant here, elephant there, elephant almost everywhere there and they live largely in the shambas to scare off elephant, and their security of livelihood depends upon the protection of their crops by the Game Department (TNA/155/24/3/18, Tubbs Report, c. 18/8/44).

Tubbs's report and subsequent correspondence reveals the failure of the colonial imagination to conceive that rural settlement patterns might be the outcome of reasoned and responsive decisions by individuals trying to optimise their livelihood strategies. They were simply not clever enough to realise that closer settlement would take them away from the elephants and nearer to shops and social services. Either that or they were locked into a pattern of primitive behaviour by clinging to inalienable traditions that were rooted in their social structure. Under the heading "native custom regarding moving", he contrasted the fluidity of Ndendeuli settlement with Ngoni stability, but this potentially fruitful line of

research was cut short by the conception of residential mobility as an essentialised tribal characteristic:

The Wandendeule move (according to my informants) every two to seven years. As far as I can see sometimes just for the fun of it. I saw one man who after living three years in one place moved three hundred yards and his old houses were still sound. The Wangoni move less frequently. Unfortunately I have no figures for the number and distribution of the various tribes (TNA/155/24/3/18, Tubbs Report 2, December 1944).

Similarly, in a curiously bureaucratic interpretation of local customs he noted that the nkosi had the right to move people from an area but not necessarily to an area.

There was no other solution but to make them move, for their own good. It was this paternalistic developmentalism that lay behind the confused justifications for resettlement.⁴³ Tubbs and the DC were acting on the understanding that the aim was to extend the Game Sanctuary, but soon the PC impatiently contradicted them with a convoluted passage that reflects the confusion itself:

I regret I have not the time, nor the inclination to write a treatise on Closer Settlement. [...] The reason why this area which it is proposed to evacuate in order to prevent the spread of sleeping sickness and in order to improve the living conditions of the inhabitants is being put into a Game Sanctuary, is so that it shall not become a NO MAN'S LAND and remain unadministered. I should be grateful if you will kindly bring this to the notice of Mr S.R. Tubbs (TNA/155/24/3/18, PC to DC, 12/10/44).

No progress had been made, then, from Kitching's position in 1934 to conceptualise the purpose of closer settlement.⁴⁴ Tubbs proposed a boundary line beyond which settlement was forbidden, which came to be known as 'Tubbs' line' (TNA/155/24/3/18, Tubbs Report, c. 18/8/44).⁴⁵

The DC was now fully converted to the cause of closer settlement, and drew up his own proposals for mass relocation of all outlying populations of the District, as well as the north-east, to include the east, south-east and south (TNA/155/24/3/18, DC to PC 12/2/45;

⁴³ A glimpse at the developmentalist motivation elsewhere in Tanganyika is given in a Provincial Commissioner's Annual Report from 1933 for a closer settlement scheme for the Ha of Wabonde and Kasulu which would "make easier the task of changing a disease-ridden and backward horde of savages into a disciplined and prosperous community" (quoted in Kjekshus 1977:169).

⁴⁴ Nothing of the confused debate surrounding the aims of the closer settlement programme reached the village level: "The reason given by Mbonani for the move was that it was near the road – there was a road from Gumbiro to Mbunga to Mgombasi" (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

⁴⁵ The number of tax exemptions to be granted to compensate those who were relocated was stated to be 700, suggesting a total population of about 2800 (TNA/155/24/3/18, DC to PC, 6/10/44). This influx

See also 23/6/45). Map 24 shows 'Tubbs' line' and the DC's proposal for its extension (TNA/155/24/3/18, Map, 21/6/45). This ambitious project was never implemented, although it appears that the PC had agreed in principle, but the fact that it was even considered allows us to draw unambiguous conclusions about official attitudes to peripheral populations in Songea: they should be brought closer to the centre of power, regardless of how this was justified. Only the outlying Yao communities were to be excused, and left as "violated settlements" in the bush rather than made to resettle under closer Ngoni control (TNA/155/24/3/18, DC to PC 12/2/45). This time, and not for the first time, the resettlement was justified by appeal to an imagined pre-colonial state:

In the days of tribal warfare, when communal offensive or defensive action was a prime consideration, the population clustered together round their leaders, in spite of their fear of witchcraft and quarrelsome neighbours. The removal of the possibilities of raiding and the absence of any control of settlement has given these other fears more scope for influencing individuals in their search for comparative security from evilly-disposed neighbours, hence the scattering abroad of the people (TNA/155/24/3/18, DC to PC, 23/6/45).

How could any colonial administrator disagree with an argument like this? Not only would resettlement help to revive the 'original' Ngoni social order in line with the ideal of Indirect Rule, but witchcraft would be suppressed as well. And implicit in this spatial reorganisation was a reassertion of local Native Authority control and the prospect of overcoming the boundary problem once and for all. Kitching's concerns in 1934 that the administration failed to understand the reasoning that lay behind settlement decisions were now long forgotten. Three months later, the DC reiterated his proposal, but this time the justification focused on the single issue of tsetse control (TNA/155/24/3/18, DC to PC, 23/6/45).⁴⁶

From Voluntarism to Villagisation, 1960-74

Resettlement in post-independence Tanzania is normally associated with Nyerere's nation-wide programme of ujamaa village development (*Ujamaa Vijijini*) and consequent Villagisation Programme of the mid-1970s which led to the establishment and/or registration of some 7000 villages. These initiatives are normally seen to have commenced with the

corresponds with the population increase in that area between 1935 and 1952 apparent from a comparison of Map 5 and Map 6.

⁴⁶ The closer settlement programme needs to be seen in the light of increasing concern throughout the 1940s about the spread of tsetse into the Mgazini area and north of Songea town, and a consequent decline in cattle (TNA/155/E1/22, Report on the recent spread of tsetse fly in the Songea District, July 1953, Bursell).

Arusha Declaration in 1967 (Nyerere 1968:13-37) but Nyerere declared his commitment to resettlement much earlier than this. One former TANU Central Committee member, Ntimbanjaye Millinga, recalled Nyerere's proposals and the effect they had in Songea:

In mid-1960 Mwalimu [Nyerere] had a meeting with the Regional and District TANU Secretaries. He said that now we were going to be independent, there would be a huge army of young people doing nothing – a politically activated young generation – and there was a danger that this force, if left alone, would be a problem. So Mwalimu came up with the idea that they should be asked to engage themselves in economic activities. He didn't say what exactly they should do, but some groups should form themselves to perform economic activities of any type: farming, small industries, and so on (quoted in Edwards 2000:104).

Nyerere's message was broadcast over the radio in 1960, and local party functionaries gathered together their respective Youth League leaders and soon more than 500 groups of young party supporters emerged throughout the country largely engaged in communal farming (Cliffe and Cunningham 1973:132-3). The vast majority of these groups collapsed within one year of establishment (Cunningham 1966:47-8). However, this did not happen in Songea District. Two dozen members of the Peramiho Branch of the TANU Youth League (TYL), led by Millinga, settled at Litowa, in north-central Njelu to follow Nyerere's call (Edwards 2000:104). From uncertain beginnings the settlement grew into an exemplar of grassroots community development and the headquarters of an organisation of 17 villages throughout Ruvuma Region.⁴⁷ This organisation became known from 1963 as the Ruvuma Development Association (RDA) and attracted acclaim from international observers as well as Nyerere himself. Apart from communal agriculture, its members developed cottage industries based on wool, masonry, carpentry and soap-making. They purchased a maize mill and sawmill, and became the only reliable source of supply of sawn timber for government development projects. An extension service emerged to provide technical and managerial advice. Their communally-run school developed in an experimental way, creating its own syllabuses and integrating its educational work with the ongoing life of the villages (Edwards 2000:101-2). Nyerere was extremely supportive of the RDA. In his writings and speeches he envisaged the development of a nation of self-governing, self-reliant communities, i.e. ujamaa villages, and the RDA appeared to be practicing the principles required to turn this vision into reality.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Ruvuma Region was created in May 1963 to form three districts: Songea District, comprising the former Njelu, Mshope and Undendeuli; Mbinga District, comprising the former Umatengo and Lake Shore; and Tunduru District. Songea was divided further to form a fourth district, Namtumbo, in 2002.

⁴⁸ He visited their headquarters in Litowa twice, in 1965 and 1966, each time encouraging them to represent Ujamaa, and it is clear from discussions with his Personal Secretary that he used the RDA as

Despite the value Nyerere attached to the Association, it generated increasingly strong opposition from government and party officials, and finally on 24 September 1969, following a long and heated debate by the Central Committee, the RDA was disbanded, its assets confiscated and its staff distributed throughout the country (Edwards 1998; Ibbott 1970:122). For many commentators, this decision represented a critical turning point in TANU's approach to rural development; the start of a shift from voluntary participation towards increased coercion, and culminating in the Villagisation Programme (Coulson 1982:263ff; Jennings 2002; Musti de Gennaro 1979; Scott 1998:223ff).⁴⁹ However, the story of the RDA can also be seen as an expression of an age-old pattern, described by Kopytoff (1987), of pioneering by disaffected groups on the frontiers of established African society. The movement had its roots in a youthful rejection of the values and institutions of colonialism, Native Authorities, and European missions. Its adherents had idealistic hopes of constructing a new social, moral and political order within the interstitial frontier regions where established authority was indeterminate. In this sense, the disbanding of the RDA can be seen to symbolise an assault by the state on the social frontiers of post-colonial society – an attempt to 'capture the peasantry'. Tanzania from the late 1960s was not the time and place for frontier communities to assert their autonomy. By this time, Undendeuli was governed by a compliant but ineffective local government that was fully integrated into the state, but still failed to engage with its scattered population. The solution was Villagisation, as we shall see.

Despite the voluntaristic rhetoric of 1967, Nyerere's commitment to top-down resettlement schemes was made explicit as early as December 1962. His justifications were explicitly developmentalist, whereby provision of tractors, schools, hospitals, clean drinking water, and village industries were all part of the same aim, which was to be attained through the creation of "proper" villages (Schneider 2002:128). With this in mind we can better understand a coercive resettlement programme in 1963 throughout northern Undendeuli.⁵⁰ Similarly, it was justified in terms of efficient provision of government services: "Up to now

a model when preparing his policy papers *Socialism and Rural Development* (Nyerere 1968[1967]:106-144), and *Education for Self-Reliance* (Nyerere 1968[1967]:44-75) (Transcript of Conversations with Joan Wicken, CAS, Edinburgh, June 1999). Soon Litowa became the focus of a steady stream of official visitors, and RDA leaders were asked to participate in policy-making at national level (Edwards 2000:103).

⁴⁹ Closer examination of the history of intervention and policy discourse since Independence reveals a more complex intertwining of coercion and voluntarism which breaks down the notion of a simple chronological shift in thinking and practice of a homogenised state apparatus with the turning point coinciding with the disbanding of the RDA (Schneider 2002).

⁵⁰ The northern populations of Undendeuli were required to move to Lugongoro, Nangero, Mgombasi, Mchomoro, Namtumbo, Mtonya, Lutono, Mkongo, Litola, Luegu and Mtulanjiwa (TNA/511/NA/9, Divisional Executive Officer to all Area Executive Officers, Undendeuli Division. "Kihamo", 12/2/63; TNA/511/NA/9, Undendeuli Divisional Executive Officer, Mahekula, to Mbunga Area Executive Officer, "Mpango wa Kihamo", 28/2/63).

the Government has not been able to bring us proper roads, clean water, sufficient hospitals, enough schools and buildings because of disorderly living” (TNA/511/NA/9, Undendeuli DEO, Mahekula, to Mbunga AEO, 28/2/63). The strength of local opposition surprised the Area Commissioner, Hinjusun, who happened to be a valuable supporter of the RDA and its voluntaristic approach. Nevertheless he had to inform his subordinate in Undendeuli, Mahekula, that the plan had come from the President himself (TNA/511/NA/9, AC to Undendeuli DEO, 20/5/63).

By 1969 efforts to mobilise the rural population to create ujamaa villages was adopting an increasingly coercive character, of which the disbanding of the RDA was one of several indications. It seems that Nyerere was becoming increasingly impatient with the inability of the rural population to create ujamaa villages of their own accord, and an increasing degree of force was required to get them to make the first steps towards nucleated ujamaa living. In 1973, Nyerere announced that “The issue of living in Ujamaa villages is now an ORDER of the party” (quoted in Schneider 2002:179). All Tanzanians were to live in villages by 1976. Incredibly this target was met, with a four-fold increase in the number of registered villages between the end of 1972 and 1976, and a comparable increase in the average population of each village (Schneider 2002:211-212). The coercion required to achieve this target inevitably led to abuses, fuelled by a competitive culture among government and party officials charged with its implementation who knew that their careers depended on quick and visible results.

Settlement and Resettlement, 1974-2002

Villagisation in Njelu and Undendeuli, 1974

The Villagisation Programme was implemented in Songea District in 1974, with marked differences between Njelu and Undendeuli in the disruption it caused. As described in Chapter One, its differential impact is most clearly expressed in Map 10 of land cover and village boundaries in 1996, some two decades after its completion. How did Villagisation help to create this situation?

When recalling Villagisation almost every informant chose not to mention ujamaa or socialism, including the MP for Songea North at that time: “The plan was to create sizeable villages with the intention of enabling people to get a water supply, schools, health services, offices, roads. People were scattered before, and it was very difficult to provide these things”

(Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town). He described candidly what was common knowledge at the time:

The theory was that the Ward and Divisional Executive Officers should sit together with the people and talk about the programme. The Officers would say ‘you are too scattered; you could settle in one centre; we think Point A is best – it is easily reached – water sources are available’, and so on. The idea was that they all sit down and discuss what to do. But unfortunately they didn’t do it like that. There was a sort of competition to finish it quickly. [...] From this competition, and from the lack of participation, the opposite occurred (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town).

A quote from a retired councillor in Namtumbo was almost identical, as if this was now the accepted, post-Nyerere line. He added: “after a while the Government realised that that was a mistake and they began to allow them to move to different places – for the sake of production (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Recalling the actions and character of the Divisional Executive Officer responsible for implementing the Programme in Undendeuli, I was told: “He is a figure who will not be forgotten quickly by the Wandendeuli. He thought nothing about listening to the people. In Undendeuli the villages were made to be very huge – without considering the future increase of population, and the need to have enough land for cultivation” (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town). Meanwhile in Ruvuma Division (formerly Njelu) Villagisation was more of a ‘tidying-up exercise’ involving shorter movements of fewer people into often already established settlements. Nobody suggested that the respective DEOs were entirely to blame since each was responding to the pre-existing pattern of settlement, roads and facilities which was already very different on each side of the District. A guiding principle for the decision over whether a settlement would be relocated or form the nucleus of a larger settlement was the presence of a school, a primary society or a church (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). Mosques were not considered sufficient symbols of stability and/or modernity to count.⁵¹ Needless to say, the Christian west of the District fared better under this arrangement than the Islamic east. Thus, I was told:

The difference between the two parts was also due to missionary influence – there was already development of infrastructure, and this was not easy to disrupt – schools, dispensaries, churches – and people were building around these areas. Not many people were scattered. But in Undendeuli people were

⁵¹ Another criterion came to be whether or not residents had been engaged in ujamaa village development activities. Thus, several former RDA villages which would have been uprooted due to their small size were to survive, including Litowa, Liweta, Mhepai, Libango and Njoomlole. Other villages such as Nambecha also avoided being relocated to Mgombasi because residents had started an ujamaa farm in 1970 (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

much more scattered, and so they were more subjected to competition between different officials (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town).

The culture of competition within the administration resulted in the establishment of fewer villages in Undendeuli than there would have been if there had been greater care, and local participation, during its planning:

There was this order from the National level that by a year's time we should have all the villages established, and we should know how many there are – so we can plan the services and infrastructure. So everyone would say, “I will finish in time, or before time”. They thought that they would be the most important person, or the most famous – not for doing it well, but for finishing quickly. Actually it was stupid competition – it didn't help the people – it just helped those who were executing it. The people were more scattered in Undendeuli than in Ungoni, so to do it quickly it was easier for the Divisional Executive Officer to say that everyone should move to Namtumbo. [...] You wouldn't have the same in Ungoni. There were already sizeable settlements around mission centres (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town).

There is no evidence that ethnic politics influenced the implementation of the programme in Songea District. The national discourse of socialist development offered practically no opportunity for this to be expressed. The disruption caused by the programme in Undendeuli could arguably be linked to the assertive character of the DEO who oversaw the operation, and the culture of competition in which he worked, but it cannot be linked directly to the fact that he happened to be an Ngoni from central Njelu.⁵²

Twenty-five years after Villagisation, the memories of over-zealous and coercive implementation are not recalled as particularly important when seen alongside its impact on attitudes and livelihoods. More often than not, village elders like Eleuterius Sanga in Msindo (near the border between Undendeuli and Mshope) stressed the positive benefits of Villagisation: “Villagisation made it easy for children to get education. Before, they were not encouraged to go to school because it was long miles to get there”. He was one of the few who mentioned that Villagisation had also increased the control of the state over its rural subjects: “Also the tax evaders could be easily identified which meant that problem was curbed. Even those who don't want to farm, they are now staying in the same place and it's easier to get them to work. It makes it easier for leaders to get people when they want them” (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo). Mustafa, another Ndendeuli elder, said what he thought

⁵² Having said this, a number of informants asserted that ethnic hatred lay behind a deeply resented campaign to relocate the residents of Lituhi on the Lake Shore during the early 1980s. Its overseer was credited with the statement, “This will be the end of the Wamanda!” While officially justified as a plan

about the way the operation was conducted in the Namtumbo area: “People have different feelings. Those who were in Namtumbo already think it is OK. Those who had been scattered before and were resettled in the towns were ‘embarrassed’ to live in a new area where they knew no one. But that is over” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). His brother added:

We were all staying in scattered homesteads. Life was a difficult thing but it had its own advantages – we could stay near to where we were producing. Villagisation brought about new ideas and new hopes, like that of staying together to get the social and economic infrastructures we needed. It was good. But now people are forced to leave and go back to scattered areas to make sure production is done. So with respect to this, Villagisation did some harm on the production side (Husseini Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango).

The present-day MP for Undendeuli (and Deputy Minister for Agriculture) highlighted how, “the Ndendeuli were neglected – they were living in the wild” and Villagisation brought them development. But it had failed to do so sustainably: “Villagisation was done without proper planning. They didn’t think there should be a place for farming, for Forest Reserves... This was not done. So in some respects, it was a hazard to the environment.” He continued:

The environment was hit hard by Villagisation. But without Villagisation, in Undendeuli – they couldn’t make it! Now there are health centres, schools... in every village... seven secondary schools, three government secondary schools – by 2005 I want there to be five. It is a really neglected area. Neglected by Colonial Government, and the Ngoni. We need to plan our land use in Undendeuli carefully (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam).

This is the dominant official narrative in post-independence Undendeuli, representing the region as a neglected area, with unstable land use and settlement patterns, but rapid developments in social services and other indicators of development. It is a region undergoing rapid change. While its description as “neglected” implies the notion of a ‘periphery’, I encountered no written or oral source that described Undendeuli as a ‘frontier’ – an area of increasing population which has been developing its own society, economy, political institutions and culture, partly in opposition to its historical adversaries, the Ngoni. A frontier is quite different from a ‘mere’ periphery, and to describe a region as such implies greater agency, self-reliance, and endogenous development on the part of its inhabitants. Arguably those very inhabitants, or their elected representatives, have more to gain from representing their region as a neglected periphery, but also this may be a more accurate reflection of their personal experience.

to save them from the effects of periodic flooding, many were relocated throughout the Region only after considerable opposition.

We saw in Chapter Four how missionisation was frustrated in the east due to the scattered and shifting character of the population. Bush schools and even churches would be constructed by missionaries only to discover that a few years later the ungrateful inhabitants had moved off into the forest. Yet the missionaries and their African catechists did succeed in gaining a physical as well as spiritual, political and economic hold on increasingly large numbers of people, helping to build settled communities of Christians. And these were overwhelmingly concentrated in the west. Arguably, the forces pulling Christians towards a settled pattern of habitation around schools, churches, missions and dispensaries will have reduced those agroecological forces pulling them away. However, the effect of Christianity on settlement stability should not be overstated. There has apparently been a place for Christian prayer in the Maposeni area for 100 years, and later a small grass-roofed building was erected at Mtukano to the north of the village. But until 1976 with the establishment of the present impressive church in the village centre people were either travelling to Peramiho to pray, or praying in the Maposeni government *baraza*. However the numbers were quite high: by the mid-1950s the proportion of the Maposeni population attending church was estimated to be one-third. Meanwhile the first bush school was established in the 1930s on the site of the present school complex. By the mid-1950s two-thirds of children were said to be attending school (Romanus Mpepo, 25/6/02, Maposeni). Along with the *baraza* and the impressive abbey at Peramiho, both erected in the late 1940s, schools symbolised the link between stability, authority and modernity.

In Undendeuli, both the physical and institutional structures of Islam were conducive to the dispersed, mobile character of a frontier population. In Undendeuli there are many mosques. In Nambecha the Friday Mosque, located near the village centre, is surrounded by smaller mosques in each sub-village (*vitongoji*). Throughout the agricultural land on the outskirts of the village, numerous tiny grass-roofed shelters and huts are also employed as mosques, which can of course be relocated according to shifting patterns of land use. While Villagisation may have encouraged establishment of more permanent structures, the dispersed pattern is conducive to the large proportion of inhabitants, especially immigrants, who live and work in their fields throughout the cultivation season (Swithurn Chiapo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo).

We are building a picture, here, of the parallel emergence of settlement stability and Christianity in central parts of Ungoni, while in Undendeuli the opposite process took place: Islam developed through informal indigenous networks through the scattered mobile populations in the east, a process linked to networks of trade and kinship. In this sense the

settlement patterns in the east and west became institutionalised by their respective religions. Meanwhile, the uptake of tobacco was also conducive to Undendeuli mobility and hindered in Njelu by the stability of its settlement patterns, an idea that is explored below.

Immigration into Songea District, 1961-2002

We have seen how resettlement campaigns contributed to the rapid increase in the population of Undendeuli over the last sixty years. A second factor has been the high incidence of immigration, which has a history stretching back to the incorporation of war captives into the pre-colonial Ngoni State. After Maji Maji, people moved into the east of Songea District from practically all directions. After Ndendeuli secession from Ngoni rule in the mid-1950s many Ndendeuli entered the area from the remaining parts of Ungoni. One Ndendeuli elder offered a characteristically political explanation for the influx: “It was the end of them being used as load carriers. The Ngoni could no longer touch those Ndendeuli in Undendeuli, so they increased their harassment on the Ndendeuli who remained in Ungoni. So they moved to the free land” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea). Since independence there has also been a gradual movement into the region of mostly Yao and some Makua and other groups from Tunduru and Masasi Districts in the east, and Mozambique in the south. Their primary destinations are Songea town, Undendeuli and to a lesser extent Mbinga District (Anton Rwamuhuru, 18/8/01, Iringa).

Refugees from the Mozambique war of independence and subsequent civil war were resettled in camps in Mputa (northern Undendeuli) and Likuyu between 1967 and the early 1990s. Many of them chose to remain in Tanzania at the time of repatriation. They were predominantly Yao, along with Changani, as well as people calling themselves ‘Nyasa’ and ‘Ngoni’ originating from the southern end of Lake Nyasa (Swithurn Chiapo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo). The first refugees crossed the Ruvuma into southern Njelu in 1967, and with international assistance they were settled in several camps nearby in Muhukuru (see Map 7). At its peak there were approximately 12,000, and 2000 chose to stay after repatriation in 1975. From 1969 a new policy was pursued to relocate new refugees north of the Songea-Lindi road for security purposes, and a major camp was established at Mputa, reaching a total of 15,000 refugees of which 5000 remained after 1975. Of those, many settled locally while others travelled elsewhere including Tanga. Some of those who were repatriated returned during the next influx in 1988 at the start of the civil war (Cassian Njunde, 11/7/01, Peramiho). These were settled beyond Likuyu on the edge of the Selous Game Reserve between 1989 and 1998 peaking with a population of 18,000 of which an estimated one-third remained (Paul Mhaiki, 14/8/01, Matagoro). Apart from the security issue, the decision over

where to locate the settlements was apolitical, and based on availability of resources such as fertile land and water (Cassian Njunde, 11/7/01, Peramiho) and at that time both the sites at Mputa and Likuyu were covered in thick forest (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea). However, most refugees were Muslims, with a willingness to cultivate tobacco, which may have assisted those who remained to incorporate into Undendeuli culture and economy.

Thus, immigration has been much greater in Undendeuli than Njelu. The primary motive is access to fertile land, and immigration into central Njelu has been limited simply because land is restricted by physical availability but also social controls over who can settle and farm. In Undendeuli fertile land is more readily available and, as discussed below, to some extent less influenced by 'customary' tenure arrangements. Apart from land itself Undendeuli offered the prospect of engaging in the tobacco industry. Nearly every village in Undendeuli is experiencing immigration. One informant remarked: "Originally Mtonya was very tiny but now it is very big. The trend is now moving towards Mgombasi" (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). I asked him whether availability of land was the only reason that outsiders were settled in greater numbers in the east, or were there social and cultural reasons as well. He replied: "First, these people were coming from the east, so definitely they will occupy the east of Songea first before any other part. Secondly, Mputa is a Yao settlement, and those from the east are basically Yao. So they come to join their fellow Yao. Also there are Makua from Masasi, who have settled between Mtonya and Likuyu and therefore more Makua from Masasi are migrating towards that place" (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Of the few communities of immigrants in Njelu, a striking example is the area around the leprosarium at Morogoro, five miles west of Peramiho, where a predominantly Yao community has grown around a settlement of recovering lepers and their relatives, leading in 2000 to the 'secession' of a new, predominantly Islamic village, Magima, in the heart of Christian Njelu.⁵³

A Matengo immigrant who had settled in Namtumbo and married an Ndendeuli estimated plausibly that the Yao population in many villages in Undendeuli was between one-quarter and one-third of the total (Matengo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo). He explained how the influx of Yao began before Villagisation in search of work, and a few remained: "When they were familiar with the place they would go back home to get their wives". He continued:

It is their character to separate a bit. In Namtumbo they live down below the school. The relationship between Yao and Ndendeuli is like *watani*. Mostly they are separated, helping each other with their particular business. For

⁵³ Another 'proto-settlement' is emerging on the boundary between Litowa, Peramiho B and Parangu, including large polygamous Yao households who have relocated from Peramiho B (Imelda Mbawa, 2/12/99, Parangu).

example if there is a funeral they will help each other. They are all immigrants, and live separated so they can 'know their problems' (Matengo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo).

The word *watani* refers to members of a 'joking relationship' between individuals from different ethnic groups with subtle differences in status which have developed through particular historical associations.⁵⁴ Yao-Ndendeuli relations were being closely compared with kinship or membership of the same ethnic group, arguably an important factor in the acceptance of Yao immigrants. The tendency of Yao immigrants to form separate communities may be linked to their historical preference for close-knit settlements which in turn has been linked to matrilineality, as mentioned in Chapter Four. My Matengo informant added: "Even if lots of Yao come, they must separate themselves" (Matengo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo). This observation raises the issue of social control over rights to reside in a village and to use village land. Mlilayoyo village, north of Songea town, has an ethnic composition of approximately 75 percent Ndendeuli and 25 percent Ngoni. Furthermore, the village is 75 percent Christian and 25 percent Islamic, reminding us that most Ndendeuli communities living outside Undendeuli in the remaining part of former Mshope are Christian. Like other villages that lie on the 'fault line' between east and west, the Mlilayoyo population has marked ethnic and religious divisions. Recently, Yao immigrants from Tunduru, Namtumbo and Ligera formed a separate community in the eastern part of Mlilayoyo village, and chose to establish a second mosque rather than use the existing mosque in the west of the village. There is a lack of trust between these immigrants and more established residents (Swithurn Chiapo, 29/6/02, Namtumbo). In Mlilayoyo there are only some 20 acres of land under direct village government control and available for allocation to newcomers. Linked to this situation is the tendency for residents to claim perhaps 20 acres per household while only farming two or three acres (due to a shortage of labour and/or cash for fertiliser). In such a situation, a host or 'sponsor' is essential for an immigrant to settle:

If you are an outsider, and you come to Mlilayoyo, you must have a 'friend' living there. The friend will say 'I have some land – you can come and live with me and farm this land'. So the person comes – but he then needs to clear it with the Village Government, because that friend of yours may turn round and say 'you can't have it anymore' and you will be in trouble. You get a certificate of rights of some kind (Swithurn Chiapo, 31/5/02, Magima).

⁵⁴ The joking relationship between Ngoni and Hehe is said to have its origins in the inconclusive outcome of the Hehe wars in 1878 and 1881 when the decision was made to postpone the conflict until the new generation had grown up.

It is not just Yao who form separate communities. In Nambecha, the furthest village north from Namtumbo, a community of Makua immigrants from Masasi has begun to develop, some distance from the village centre, often sleeping at their farms and hardly participating in village affairs. An established Nambecha elder criticised them dismissively for “destroying the soil”, and later I was told why this attitude prevailed:

Those immigrants in Nambecha – they are strangers – they don’t feel that the land is their own. That’s why they are scattered – they live lonely – they want to be free with trees... the Makua don’t like vegetable *mboga* – they want meat. They find small antelopes – they even eat rats! They don’t eat vegetables regularly. This is why they live away – and also to be free with the land... they are poaching in the Selous, and they get punished by the game wardens (Swithurn Chiapo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo).

He explained how the Government was trying to introduce community-based wildlife management in this south-west corner of the Selous Game Reserve, involving the allocation of hunting quotas to each village, to engender a sense of ownership: “So that they think, ‘This is our animal – how can I steal it?’ [...] But the Makua, they know nothing” (Swithurn Chiapo, 6/7/02, Namtumbo).

Control over Land and Residence

These observations raise a key issue: are there differences in the nature and degree of social control exercised over immigrants’ rights to settle in a village and use village land in the east and west of the District? I asked an Agricultural Field Officer to contrast the situation in Maposeni and Undendeuli. He said: “In Maposeni you need to go and introduce yourself to the *lidoda* and greet him and ask permission to do anything”. I asked “but in Undendeuli?” He replied: “In Undendeuli there is only government” (Swithurn Chiapo, 31/5/02, Magima). Is it valid to say that the long history of settlement instability in Undendeuli and its disruptive resettlement programmes removed customary arrangements to control rights over residence and access to land, leaving “only government” to regulate access to these resources? Likewise, in Njelu, were the Native Authorities and other officially-unrecognised leaders such as *madoda* still largely in control? Had these individuals managed to survive independence, and Villagisation, with their powers largely intact? Is it valid to think in terms of a distinction between government and customary control over land and residence?

The system of land law in Tanzania permits settlement in any village. As my informant in Libango explained: “Nobody can say ‘no’ to any settler – the law cannot prevent people from moving in” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Eleuterius Sanga

elaborated: “The system is that all land is now under the control of village government; if one wants to use village land you must say so to the village government and you will get a piece of land depending upon the size of your family. [...] This has been the procedure, in fact, since Villagisation” (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo). Thus, Villagisation increased state control over land at the expense of customary arrangements. However, in practice, social constraints act upon this legal norm, as demonstrated by the fact that immigrants, as a rule, seek out a ‘friend’ to sponsor them before approaching the village government with a formal request. By examining this process, and how it has changed before and after Villagisation in various parts of the District, we begin to tease out the broad differences between east and west in the relationship between government and customary systems of control.

Control over Land and Settlement in Njelu and Undendeuli

Customary and Government Control in Peramiho

Peramiho is now a small town, administered as two independent villages: A and B. Cassian Njunde and his ancestors have traditionally been controllers of land in what is now the Njunde sub-village of Peramiho A, and it was his great grandfather who ‘gave the land’ to the first missionaries. When asked about the social constraints faced by newcomers he mentioned a Yao settlement that had grown up in Peramiho B over the last 50 years. Immigrants from Tunduru came to him and asked, “Are there any Yaos around here?” And Njunde would send them to Peramiho B: “You had better go and join them” (Cassian Njunde, 31/7/01, Peramiho). Another resident confirmed how this worked: “Everybody around would say, if a Yao comes, ‘You had better go and stay with your fellow Muslims’ (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 9/7/01, Peramiho). Thus “everyone” supported the growth of an ethnic and religious divide between the two parts of Peramiho, and incidentally Peramiho B has become the business centre for both villages as a consequence of trade networks dominated by Muslims. The situation at the time of Villagisation was revealing: “In Peramiho A, at Villagisation, the Village Chairman clearly said ‘No!’ to Yao wishing to settle here”. Thus, it was much easier for landless ‘Ngoni’ to settle in Njunde, and for the Yao to settle in Peramiho B. Indeed a number of ‘Ngoni’ newcomers from settlements north of Litowa found land quickly in Njunde (Ntimbanjayo Millinga, 1/8/01, Peramiho). Importantly, in taking this stand, the Village Chairman was representing the established Ngoni residents of Peramiho A, but at the same time he was also representing the ‘class’ interests of those controlling access to land. However, the notion of a land-controlling class does not work well in this context, and it

appears that his action was intended to be a popular move that also served to sustain the established socio-political order. Thus, at the time of Villagisation in Peramiho A, there was not a clear distinction between government control and customary control over land. It is more accurate to see the two as closely linked and mutually-supportive elements within a specific socio-political context with a culture which might (with reservation) be described as 'conservative'.⁵⁵

Nearly three decades later, the situation was similar, but the Village Government now had greater control. I was told: "If you want land in Njunde you have to be a member of the family or a close friend. But to get land in Peramiho as a whole you can try the traditional way but as an outsider it would be much easier to go through the local government in the formal way. There are demarcated plots available for people who want to apply" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 9/7/01, Peramiho). Only now is it applicable to think in terms of a distinction between government and customary control, but the distinction is still not clear-cut. Now the Village Chairmen of Peramiho A and B are expected to follow national directives regarding land tenure, overseen by district level authorities. The persistence of customary control was demonstrated when the construction of a football pitch in the centre of Njunde was proposed by residents in 2001. I was told that the required land was "donated" to the Village Government by the Njunde clan (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 9/7/01, Peramiho). Government has taken control of the peripheral ring of Peramiho while the inner core, such as Njunde, is still under customary control, although this is weakening with the new legislation that is being introduced (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/8/01, Peramiho). Cassian Njunde described the gradual increase of government control over land formerly controlled by his clan. He started by mentioning the increasing shortage of land due to population increase and implied that this was part of the explanation. He continued:

I have land three or four kilometres away, for my children. The Government is taking land from Njunde [Sub-Village] even today. Only five years ago the Government took control of land in Njunde. Before, you could introduce people – they would come from the Lake Shore, and say: 'I want to settle here because I have my wife in hospital'. And you would show him the land

⁵⁵ In post-independence Tanzania, the village chairman is elected, and assisted by a Village Executive Officer who is appointed by the District Council. Below these is the lowest level of government consisting of individuals elected to represent their sub-villages in a council of 25 people. Together these form the Village Government, and in principle they have real power over creating and enforcing bylaws and village development projects. The attitude of many people in public life was summarised by one informant: "This is an attempt to introduce democracy to the village level, but in practice there has always been the problem that people elect what might be called a 'poor-quality' Village Chairman, who is compliant. The reason, he explained, was that, "They don't want to be controlled" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/6/02, Peramiho). I was told by the former Village Chairman of Mlilayoyo how he was replaced by a more compliant successor, because he was more malleable. "People want an uneducated person", he said (Swithurn Chiapo, 31/5/02).

to settle in. It wasn't hard to settle here. These days the Government tries to control people – its not just with land (Cassian Njunde, 31/7/01, Peramiho).

A copy of the Village Land Act 1998 happened to be on his dining room table, and he pointed out passages that demonstrated how the “traditional land controllers” like him had lost their power: “You must apply to the Village Council for a customary right of occupancy”. He had phoned the District Land Office the previous day to make a request to purchase formal rights to the land his clan has traditionally controlled for over a century (Cassian Njunde, 31/7/01, Peramiho).

The ‘conservatism’ encountered at the time of Villagisation in Peramiho A may have declined, but in outlying villages of Njelu customary control is still strong and it is harder as a rule for outsiders (non-Ngoni) to settle or farm there. This is particularly the case in villages such as Maposeni, Liganga and Mpitimbi, the historical settlements of the Ngoni ruling families, but also to a lesser extent in established villages such as Mgazini. Much depends on the character of the village governments. Many of them in Njelu were “very conservative”, I was told, compared to a small town like Peramiho where formal legal processes were being followed more closely (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 9/7/01, Peramiho). On another occasion I was told: “This conservatism is less than it was before Villagisation – in Maposeni as well. Undendeuli is more open to people moving in” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 14/6/02, Peramiho).

The division between customary and government control can be seen in terms of a conflict between ‘tradition’ and ‘modernity’. The boundary between Maposeni (and its sub-village Ndirima, the headquarters of successive Njelu nkosis) and neighbouring Litowa (the former headquarters of the RDA) separates two villages which, during the 1960s, had communities with vastly different attitudes to development. Conflicts began before independence in 1960 with Nkosi Xaver's attempts to obstruct the requests of the TYL for permission to settle and farm at Litowa. He was unsuccessful because, even by this time, TANU had become strong enough to override the authority of a chief. By 1987, long after the disbanding of the RDA, Litowa resembled other Njelu villages, with a predominantly Ngoni population and a small Yao community.⁵⁶ In this year, the boundary between the villages was due to be demarcated, and Xaver claimed a contested area called Madimba, asserting that it had been part of Maposeni before Independence. But Millinga, speaking on behalf of Litowa, argued that people from Madimba had settled in Litowa during and after Villagisation, so they had a right to claim the land for Litowa. The land was given to Litowa in a case that demonstrated that, in a post-Villagisation age, the claims of the common farmer were of equal

weight to those of a former chief, but perhaps only if you had Millinga, a retired MP, on your side (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 14/6/02, Peramiho).

The View from the Metropole – Maposeni

Maposeni is a stable settlement. Daniel Gama has lived on the same spot since he was born in 1930 ten metres from the still visible ruins of the house of his grandfather Nkosi Usangila. In 1898 Nkosi Mputa relocated to Maposeni from Mbinga Mharule in search of fertile land, and ruled from there until his execution after the Maji Maji rebellion (see Map 20). Around the same time, Usangila, who was appointed nkosi by the British in 1926, had settled at nearby Ndirima, which became the *baraza*. Usangila was succeeded by Korofindo in 1941 who transferred the Baraza to Maposeni in 1945. After his death in 1949 he was replaced by Xaver who chose to reside at Ndirima while his office remained at Maposeni. In 1963, after the abolition of chiefs, Xaver successfully applied for the post of Divisional Executive Officer and was posted to the Lake Shore and other places before retiring and returning to Ndirima shortly after Villagisation. He remained in Ndirima until his death in 2001, but during Villagisation almost the entire population of Ndirima had been relocated, mostly to central Maposeni but also Ndunduwalo to the north. His only neighbour was Romuard Shawa, a retired army officer (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni). I asked Daniel Gama what Xaver had felt about the disruption to his former community. Gama's answer indicated how much Xaver's influence had declined:

He was completely unsatisfied... But it was impossible. He complained but he was returning as a retired Divisional Executive Officer, not a chief, and had no power to say anything. He tried, but the Government didn't hear him. They said, 'You are an educated man and a government leader. It's the constitution to move – you know it' (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni).

As a measure of Maposeni's demographic stability, between 1930 and 1974 Gama recalled that just two families had migrated into the area: Turuka, who settled near Njozi, and was originally from Mbinga in Umatengo; and Komba, who settled near Mbawa, and was originally from the Lake Shore. At Villagisation, 18 additional family groups were moved into the new Maposeni village centre.⁵⁷ Approximately 75 percent of these originated beyond

⁵⁶ Individuals from Yao and other ethnic groups were actively encouraged by locals to join Litowa and other RDA villages as a contribution towards development through abandoning colonially imposed tribal identities (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/8/01, Peramiho).

⁵⁷ The newcomers consisted of two different Haule's, two Nguruwe's, two Njovu's, Satu, Huma, Shawa (from Ndirima), Ndunguru, Komba, Mbawala, Nyoni, Mwalle, Ntara, Soko, Nchimbi, and Ndiwu.

the present village boundaries and 25 percent were resident. This is a significant level of immigration, but most originated relatively close by, from Ndirima (3 miles), Mtesuka (5 miles), Mtukano (3 miles), Luhirameza (8 miles) and Likwambi (4 miles). Very few families had moved in between Villagisation and the present-day. Gama recalled just three: Luambano, Tambalamba and Mbigi (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni) although there were some families residing in neighbouring villages who were also farming on Maposeni land.

Prior to Villagisation, individual clan elders were said to control rights to land and residence in their respective clan area, although it seems unlikely that there were many unambiguous social and physical boundaries between groups and territories. Gulliver wrote in 1954 how “small clusters of houses may endure for many years” but “beyond these small clusters there is no coherent group at all” (Gulliver 1954:107). The concept of community existed in the sense that groups of relatives and neighbours cooperated, especially during agricultural working parties. But “it is not possible to see clearly the boundaries of such an ad hoc community” (Gulliver 1954:108). On the other hand, he noted that, “There is however a rudimentary system of what can be called ‘land control’”. The first man to settle in an area, the *mwenyeji*, required any subsequent newcomers to seek his permission to settle there. “Each newcomer therefore tends to take over a compact area of land, and he himself becomes *mwenyeji* of that block and can in his turn allocate parts or the whole of it to anyone he likes, with only brief notification of the original *mwenyeji*” (Gulliver 1954:109). This account is in line with the recollections of elders in present-day Maposeni. The Gamas lived at the centre as a fairly distinct community of about 30 people, and controlled the largest area of land of any clan in the area. I was told how the Gamas did not interfere with land controlled by clan elders elsewhere in the vicinity. Indeed, the heads of these clans, such as Mwanja and Komba, were said to have been the *madoda*. Njunde in Peramiho was also a *lidoda* of Gama, and as we have seen it is Njunde, not Gama, who is remembered to have given land to the missionaries in 1898 (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni).

Otmar Satu provides an example of a family living on the outskirts of the village at the time of Villagisation. As described in Chapter Five, in 1987 he moved back to a former home beyond the Mpulungwa River to pursue his farming activities free from restriction. Satu’s grandfather had travelled as an old man from Mbinga Mharule at the end of the nineteenth century together with Usangila and his adherents. Before Usangila continued on to Ndirima he asked Satu where he would like to settle, and Satu chose Mzutu, which was two miles north from their current location. The settlement at Mzutu comprised about ten families (approximately 50 people) and it was there that Otmar was born in 1925. In his lifetime Satu had relocated seven times, each move averaging about 1.5 miles, but on one occasion just a couple of hundred metres. Their location before being moved at Villagisation had been about

two hundred metres from their current location (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni). There was nothing unusual about this history, and it is supported by Gulliver's writings (Gulliver 1954). What is significant for this thesis is that the relocations were as frequent as those made by Ndendeuli in the east but of a much shorter distance, as discussed below. Similarly, Romuard Shawa of Ndirima explained that by the 1950s people were farming typically on a rotation of four years continuous cultivation after which time there was a fallow period of between six and ten years, and cultivation would switch to new plots cleared from the forest. Their houses however were not relocated nearly as frequently. At that time there was certainly enough land to sustain this pattern, until Villagisation, a claim that supports the thesis given in Chapter Five that availability of fertile land was by no means the only factor constraining the uptake of tobacco.

At the time of Villagisation, two committees were established: one to allocate one acre of land for buildings to each family, the other to allocate three acres for agriculture. Families that were already based near the new village centre were able to remain, and unoccupied areas within a radius of, say, half a mile from the Baraza were settled with newcomers by the Government. Thus, Daniel Gama's experience of Villagisation was more favourable than Xaver Gama's in Ndirima since his house was close to the government buildings erected in the late 1940s. He recalled: "I was very happy, because the Government didn't take my land to give to the immigrants". Having said that, people were resettled on land over which he had control, although it was not being cultivated at the time. One example was Otmar Satu who was moved into Gama's land but was free to choose the precise location, a process that was not recalled to have been a problem since there was ample land. Their relations with the Gamas were assisted by the fact that the Village Government was overriding customary tenure, and effectively on Satu's side. Satu recalled: "For example there might have been a place with cassava growing on the Gama land, and the Government would say to the Gamas: 'Take away your cassava – they are settling here now'" (Otmar Satu, 24/6/02, Maposeni).

At Villagisation, then, government control rapidly and comprehensively replaced traditional control. Reconstruction of relocations of individual households show us how orderly the operation was, with families filling the gaps between those already established near the centre, and minimal disturbance to the relative positions of original inhabitants. Regarding the allocation of land for farming, people on the whole simply farmed on the outer fringes of their new *kitongoji* but there is no by-law restricting where an individual should farm, and internal boundaries have only been demarcated within the residential areas of each *kitongoji*. However, as in Peramiho, customary rights were respected to a large extent, and since Villagisation it is clear that village government control has increased further at the

expense of customary control. In present-day Maposeni every household has at least three acres of farmland allocated to them, but the original inhabitants have control over more. Approximately 50 percent of the total area of farmland in Maposeni is unallocated forest over which the Village Government is now the sole authority. The present ruling is that a family must be cultivating all the land under their control continuously before being eligible to a plot of this new land. Thus, Daniel Gama has ten acres under his personal control, but is only farming five acres. The Village Government will not allocate virgin land until he is using all ten acres continuously, incidentally requiring substantial inputs of fertiliser (Daniel Gama, 22/6/02, Maposeni).

Again, at the time of Villagisation, if a family wanted to settle on land controlled by Daniel Gama, it was he who decided. But if the same happened today it was the Village Government that decided. However, in current practice a newcomer would first ask Gama for permission, and only if this is granted would formal permission be sought from the Village Government. Thus, the situation was not clear-cut, and original inhabitants still have influence over government. On recent occasions Daniel Gama had been made to allocate land – “he was not pleased to give it, but he did” – although once he did successfully refuse one person who requested permission to farm on his land. Not surprisingly, refusals of this kind are most likely to happen if there is no clear relationship – as family, friend or neighbour – between newcomer and host (Sabinus Nyoni and Matiselius Ndiwu, 23/6/02, Maposeni). A more striking example of a landholder recently refusing to relinquish control was Romuard Shawa who claims customary control over some 150 acres of land at Ndirima in the north of Maposeni. The Village Government tried to reduce this claim to 50 acres, allowing the remaining 100 to be reallocated to other villagers. Shawa refused and took the case to the District Court, but the Village Government had insufficient funds to pursue the case and the matter remains unresolved. This situation arose despite the fact that the new Village Land Act (1998) which was interpreted by the Village Government to confirm that they had responsibility to take this land and redistribute it (Sabinus Nyoni and Matiselius Ndiwu, 23/6/02, Maposeni). Thus village government power is still limited by customary claims to land, especially if the claimant has economic or political power. A similar situation arose in neighbouring Morogoro village with a successful claim to some hundreds of acres in an area of increasing land shortage on the basis of customary rights before Villagisation (Participant Observation, 17/3/00, Morogoro).

I was given rough estimates of the amount of land still claimed by those families that have been resident in Maposeni since at least 1930. Apart from the 150 acres currently controlled by Shawa, Daniel Gama controlled 100 acres, Magagura and Mpepo each controlled 50, Mbawa, Njozi and Mwanja each controlled 30, and Miti controlled rather less.

Of these, Gama, Mbawa, Magagura and Mwanja historically had more power over land because they were said to have been close socially to the Chief, and politically weaker families had already had land reallocated by the Government. Mwanja was an exception in that they were historically powerful but had lost a large amount of land, while Shawa, as we have seen, had used his substantial economic power to secure his claim. These data are revealing since they show the kind of influence customary rights still hold in this historical centre of power (Sabinus Nyoni and Matiselius Ndiwu, 23/6/02, Maposeni).

In Maposeni since the time of Villagisation, the distinction between customary and government control appears to be a valid way to understand local realities. The Village Council in Maposeni, as elsewhere, comprised 25 people, including the ten *vitongoji* heads of which five were said to have moved to the village during or after Villagisation, indicating that the Council was not controlled by an established 'elite' (Elenzian Shawa, 20/6/02, Maposeni). I asked locals whether the Gamas for example have many relatives on Village Government committees and are able to influence decisions in their favour. The VEO replied, "No, because there are only two or three of them on the Council. They need to be shown respect, but they have no real influence" (Sabinus Nyoni and Matiselius Ndiwu, 23/6/02, Maposeni). In this sense, then, village democracy is working even in Maposeni. However, customary control can often be strongly felt in other ways. Recently, the catechist who had been posted to Maposeni found himself unable to work in the village and was forced to leave. He was a Gama, but from the rival Putire clan, historically based in Liganga to the west, and was being obstructed by fellow Gamas, although it is likely that his character had contributed to the conflict (Lambert Doerr, 15/6/02, Peramiho).

Local Movements of Farmers in Namtumbo

We have seen how customary rights over land and residence continue to operate in Peramiho and Maposeni, but their significance is declining relative to government control. By contrast, in Undendeuli the new village centres that were chosen at the time of Villagisation had a much smaller proportion of established residents claiming customary rights. Thus, the new Village Government came to be composed primarily of newcomers who accordingly did not undemocratically represent the interests of a large body of established residents (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/8/01, Peramiho).

Like Peramiho, Namtumbo is now a small town, and in July 2002 it was chosen as the new Namtumbo District headquarters. However unlike Peramiho the local economy is of course dependent on agriculture, in particular tobacco, which is reflected in the markedly less developed retail trade in Namtumbo market compared to Peramiho. Although the soil in both

Namtumbo and Peramiho has now lost much of its fertility, the response in Namtumbo is that approximately half of the farmers who officially reside there travel to farm on its outskirts between three and six miles away. One Namtumbo resident estimated that three-quarters of these travelling farmers spend their nights at their farms in grass-roofed shelters during the cultivation and harvest seasons. They leave their children in Namtumbo to attend school, leading to the creation of new villages, such as Nigeregere, five miles east of Namtumbo, as farmers request new schools from the Government. Those who commute each day travel on bicycles or by foot in all directions from Namtumbo village centre. Since only a small proportion of the land is subject to customary controls, access is straightforward (Saidi Kanduru, 30/6/02, Namtumbo). The reason can be measured by local differences in fertiliser requirements. In Namtumbo farmers may use 200-300 kg per acre, while new farms on the outskirts of town require between 25-50 kg per acre, and if the plot has just been cleared from the forest none is required at all. Families with sufficient labour to clear new land can travel year by year further away from the village centres in search of virgin soil (Swithurn Chiapo, 30/6/02, Namtumbo; Joyce Paul, 22/5/00, Namtumbo).

This pattern of movement occurs on a far smaller scale in Peramiho, and of course it is part of the explanation for the superiority of Undendeuli in agriculture and tobacco production. However, even in Maposeni today there is new land available to farm, but, as we have seen, its allocation is restricted until a household is continually using their three-acre quota in order to conserve remaining forest. However, village governments in Undendeuli also care about their environment, as demonstrated clearly by recent Village Level Planning exercises. These give village assemblies the opportunity to identify priority problems for which they feel that district government can help, leading typically to requests for money for schools, dispensaries, roads, etc. Every village that lists the environment as the most pressing problem during this planning process becomes the target of a one-week Participatory Land Use Management (PLUM) exercise with an interdisciplinary team of district officials, which helps the Village Government to introduce bylaws to control land use, and to plant trees. Between 1999 and 2001, 14 PLUM exercises were carried out in the District, and only one of these was in central Njelu. The remaining 13 were to the east.⁵⁸ PLUM exercises were only requested in tobacco growing areas and/or charcoal producing areas. Despite the higher population density and longer history of land use in Njelu, the environment was not considered by locals to be a serious problem. This observation points to a key conclusion of

⁵⁸ In 1999 there were PLUM exercises in Gumbiro, Kilangalanga, Mkongo-Gulioni and Namanguli. In 2000 they were in Mpitimbi B, Mtakanini, Mawa, and Mlilayoyo. In 2001, they were due to be in Chengena, Mtumbatimaji, Nahimba (a new village between Mkongo Gulioni, Mkongo Nakawale and Mwangaza), Maguezi (a new village west of Mlilayoyo), Likalagiro (a new village north of Maguezi), and Lilambo in Njelu (Monica Lindi, 7/8/01, Songea town).

this chapter: in villages like Maposeni there was, and still is, stronger control over land use *per se* – both by government and customary institutions. By contrast, in Undendeuli, there has been a long history of weaker control – again both by government and customary institutions. The history of settlement instability and disruptive resettlement programmes in Undendeuli lie at the heart of the problem that the PLUM team is attempting to solve. Instability is grounded in local economic and social institutions and even the structures of government. It is a characteristic of many internal African frontiers, and as such may prove very difficult to change.⁵⁹

Settlement Stability in the North-east of Undendeuli

The recollections of Mustafa Fukara about settlement change in north-east Undendeuli offer a valuable contrast to those of Gama and Satu in Maposeni. Fukara calculated that the population of Mtimbira was not more than 500 people at the time of his birth there in 1937. There was a bush school, and at that time this was only the case for the larger settlements. Four miles from Mtimbira was Nahoro with 300 people; 10 miles away was Nambawale also with 300 people; 15 miles away was Luhira with 500 people, and five miles further still was the similar sized settlement of Iyombo. Thirty miles away was Mchochohe with 600 people. At each of these settlements people lived in scattered family farms (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). It is this dispersed population that became the target of the closer settlement programme in the late 1940s. Almost the entire population of Mtimbira (and some residents of Luhira) was relocated forty miles south to present-day Nambecha, which is currently the northernmost village in Undendeuli. At this stage however the settlement was named Msindeni. He recalled that 43 family heads, representing a total population of about 200, formed the new settlement, of which 20 were tobacco farmers cultivating up to one acre each.⁶⁰

Reconstruction of the main population movements around Msindeni (i.e. Nambecha) village between 1942 and 2002 indicated the high degree of mobility of this frontier

⁵⁹ This is acknowledged by PLUM coordinators in Dar es Salaam who recognise that “one big issue is whether the programme will continue in the villages after the initial activity, 10 or 15 years down the line” (Experancia Tibesana, 24/2/00, Dar es Salaam). Nevertheless it is being promoted: “The donors are pushing JFM [Joint Forest Management] and we won’t get any money unless we do JFM” said one NGO representative, although she agreed that it was the “right thing to do” (Anneth Mwakimi, 24/2/00, Dar es Salaam). Another intervention in land use was the Kilimo Mseto [literally ‘agroforestry’] programme from 1991 to 1997 involving distribution of tree seedlings to villagers, training in afforestation, institution building, etc The programme was restricted to the west of Songea District rather than Undendeuli; ironically, since most deforestation was in the tobacco growing areas in the east (Prudensia Salla and Florence Mwalle, 27/11/00, Songea town).

population in stark contrast with Maposeni.⁶¹ The reasons for these frequent moves, averaging perhaps five miles, but often much further were given by Fukara: “In those days, people moved a lot. You cultivated in one place for two or three years, then leave and use another place when the fertility was not good anymore. The land was so big – so why stay in one place if you can move around? Also, if you settle somewhere and two of your children die, they you say ‘No. This is not a good place!’ There must be witchcraft...” (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). These reasons will have been valid in Njelu as well, but an additional historical explanation for Ndendeuli scattered settlement, given without prompting, pinpointed a key insight:

The Ngoni lived as rulers – and the rulers, from their habits, want to govern the people so that they can rule well. The Ndendeuli were the people being ruled, and each time they were caught, they were sent to the rulers to work for them – for building, making roads, the rulers’ houses, stores for maize, and so on. That is why the Ndendeuli lived apart – if the Ngoni came after them they would be able to say ‘They [Ndendeuli] are here!’ But living apart meant that it was easy to escape. If we live together we could all be caught all together – at once. So it was a kind of defence – that is why we lived scattered (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

Fukara also explained how government control over people had become easier after they had been subjected to the closer settlement campaign in the 1940s through closer contact with their resident nyapara, and with Nduna Saidi Palangu who was now just 20 miles away in Mbunga (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha). The link between scattered settlement and political autonomy helps us to understand the political culture of the Ndendeuli populations on the frontier of a society dominated by Ngoni authority and morality. It is this link that was weakened considerably by resettlement programmes, allowing the Government to exert greater control over people’s lives, for better or worse, of which control over land and settlement were the tangible expressions.

⁶⁰ Arguably, the proportion cultivating tobacco was soon to increase as a result of the greater social contact brought about by resettlement (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha).

⁶¹ First the entire population of Mtimbira was moved to Msindeni in 1942. In 1946, some people moved three miles out to ‘Nambecha’ (and returned during Villagisation in 1974). In 1951, some moved out, just 500 metres, and then moved a similar distance again in 1956 to reach Msindeni (and returned during Villagisation in 1974). Some moved seven miles from Nandete (referred to in the text) to Nchakata in 1966 (five miles from present-day Nambecha – outside the current village boundary, and were then returned to Nambecha in 1974). Some moved in from Mtimbira to a place 20 miles from Mtimbira (and four miles from present-day Nambecha) in 1947, moving again in 1971 about two miles towards present-day Nambecha as far as Majengo (and then relocated another two miles to Nambecha in 1974). Some moved to Mahokowela in 1947, ten miles away from Masimango, and then in 1959 they moved on to Masimango, four miles from Nambecha (and were relocated to Nambecha in 1974). Finally, after Villagisation, immigrants from Masasi District arrived in 1985 and settled just beyond Masimango close to the boundary with Mtumbatimaji village (Mustafa Fukara, 5/7/02, Nambecha).

Ndendeuli Networks in the 1950s

Neighbours, Networks and the Idiom of Kinship

A final perspective on settlement and land use in Undendeuli is provided again by Gulliver's writings, in this case his "partial ethnography" based on fieldwork in the Mchomoro area in 1953. The most important insight from this work was that Ndendeuli social organisation at that time on the eastern frontier was best conceived of as a kinship network: "There were virtually no specialised roles of an economic, political, or religious kind among these people. A person's closer associates, neighbours, supporters, friends-in-need were kinsfolk" (Gulliver 1971:4). The idiom of kinship was the mode of all social action, including dispute settlement and economic cooperation. Unlike the Ngoni, Ndendeuli actively rejected notions of lineal descent, and "they were scornful of those peoples they knew of, such as the patrilineal Ngoni and matrilineal Yao, who did impose artificial limits (as it seemed to them) on the range of social relationships" (1971:126). He wrote how authority was linked to settlement stability and patrilineality: "Among the commoner population of the Ngoni Mshope Chiefdom there had, of course, necessarily been an acceptance of organized authority, and there seemed to have been less residential movement. Local communities remained more stable in composition and, perhaps under Ngoni influence, patrilineal kinship was a more dominant feature of social organisation" (1971:36-7). The lightness of administration in the east was reflected in the loose geographical connection between communities and their jumbes and wanyapara. He wrote:

In the Ngoni-controlled parts of the Mshope chiefdom the norm was for a headman to move together with his commoners, when required under shifting cultivation, thus maintaining both the community and his authority in it. But the Ndendeuli, freed of control, had been moving residentially on an individual basis. [...] This is a measure of the superficiality of colonial rule amongst these people. Many local communities... contained no headman at all – that is, no subordinate official of the local government or the Administration (1971:37).

We see here how the closer settlement campaign of the 1940s and Villagisation in the 1970s both increased political control over Ndendeuli populations. Social and spatial organisation was based upon communities, like Mtimbira described above. These tended to follow a life-cycle beginning with its establishment by a small group of perhaps a dozen pioneers which

attracted newcomers until the decline in soil fertility forced the community to move on. During its lifetime there was a fair amount of residential movement since no single authority or corporate group controlled rights to residence or land. In principle newcomers were always welcome to increase the size of the community, but as in present-day villages each required one or more kin-relations who already resided in the community to act as a sponsor (1971:66-8).⁶²

These communities were not just collections of people, but organised internally through the particular configuration of its kinship network, which brought together fairly regular but continually evolving combinations of cooperating kin-relations. These could be called 'clusters'. Gulliver stresses that: "The local community was not bound together by the values and advantages of common descent or joint rights over property or corporate opposition to and defence against other communities. Neither did it find identity and unity as a section of an organized political system or of a wider segmentary system" (1971:55). It is this which marked Ndendeuli communities apart from those clans described for Maposeni between 1930 and 1960, where clan elders held greater authority in a patrilineal system of descent that was further strengthened through a hierarchical social organisation extending down from the *nkosi*, to his *ndunas*, *madoda* and *sutu*, which in turn was given greater political and moral authority through buttressing by the Colonial State and Catholic Church.

The closest we get to positions of authority in Ndendeuli were those individuals who emerged as 'notables' on account of their fortuitous position within the kinship network allowing them to call upon relatively large clusters of supporters at times of need. Clusters and notables emerged together over time. Notables were seen by Gulliver as "rather ambitious men, at least by Ndendeuli standards", but not in the sense of acquiring authority over the community, which was sanctioned by an egalitarian ethic, and ran the risk of witchcraft accusations (1971:66).

His neighbours would have reacted strongly against the suspicion of authoritarianism, or pretension to it, on the part of a notable. Ndendeuli were inclined to be somewhat cynical about the notables in their communities, perceiving that those men were operating at least partly in their own interests and to their own advantage, sometimes even at the expense of those they purported to help and advise (1971:244-5).

⁶² Gulliver estimated that the life-cycle of a community in the first half of the century was approximately between 15 and 25 years, while at its peak the community might comprise between 15 and 20 hamlets, comprising 40 to 50 households, and a total population of 150 to 200 people spread over an area of two to three square miles (Gulliver 1971:54). Communities lasted on average for about two decades, and on average individuals chose to relocate every 12 years, which appears to be similar to central parts of Ungoni (Gulliver 1971:338). What differs from Ungoni, however, was the distance moved which tended to be around ten miles, much more than in Maposeni at that time (Gulliver 1971:288).

The contrast with Ngoni ‘big men’ helps us to understand the divergent political cultures emerging on the frontier and at the metropole of colonial rural society in the District. Regarding the Ndendeuli separatist leaders, Gulliver noted that, “They were sometimes described sardonically as ‘being like Ngoni’. The stereotype of the Ngoni, in Ndendeuli eyes, was an authoritarian person always seeking power over others in order to compel them to do as he wished for his own advantage” (1971:244-5).⁶³ The subtle character of authority in Ndendeuli communities was elaborated upon:

With the partial exception of the younger married men, household heads were considered to be equals who did not recognize any authority over them within the community. Ndendeuli were inclined to emphasize this fact, for they saw it in contrast to what they perceived to be the status-conscious, authoritarian Ngoni. They saw egalitarianism and the absence of authority as admirable traits of their own culture (1971:66).

Individual decisions about residence were apparently made easier by the “generally non-authoritarian, even indulgent, relations between father and sons” which he judged to be “much more tolerant and easy-going” than in other East African societies, implicitly including the Ngoni (1971:306). This representation can be set against that of present-day heads of polygamous households as authoritarian overseers of tobacco production. Possibly household politics have become more authoritarian over the last fifty years, in line with greater incorporation into the state and international markets, and corresponding valuing of progress over tradition. But this quote reminds us not to downplay the significance of shared ambitions of all household members in Ndendeuli’s emerging cultural economy.

Segmentation and Fission in Namabeya, 1952-54

Although segmentation was rare in 1950s, it did emerge in 1952 in Namabeya, near Mchomoro, eventually leading to its fission in 1954. Although described by Gulliver for the very different purpose of contributing to sociological understanding of social networks, these events tell us much about specific political, economic and cultural changes in the region in that crucial period of Ndendeuli secession from Ngoni rule.

Namabeya was founded by thirteen pioneers around 1940 and by 1953 there were 42 households in 18 hamlets with a total of 200 people spread over three square miles

⁶³ Such clear differences in political culture may also help to understand the response to Christianity in Ungoni through authoritarian teachings by African (typically Ngoni) catechists who styled themselves on their European superiors.

(1971:256). In 1952, an official from the Cooperative Union in Songea held a meeting in the community and proposed that they cleared a six-mile track as far as the Songea-Lindi road so that tobacco could be marketed from the area making it profitable to cultivate. One of Namabeya's notables, Amiri, was particularly keen on this idea, as was a relative, Mohammedi, and they urged their neighbours to help contribute the required voluntary labour. Their reasoning was that, by earning cash at home, the young men in the community would be freed from the burden of labour migration to the coast. A third resident, Lihamba, was far less enthusiastic and soon chose to oppose the idea openly. Gulliver wrote: "He took the conservative view that Namabeya and similar communities had managed in the past without a road, and he foresaw danger in becoming involved with the Cooperative Society which, he persisted, was merely a branch of the Government". The discussion led to verbal antagonism. The outcome was that in September Amiri and Mohammedi, and their respective clusters, spent ten days preparing the road under Amiri's supervision (since he had once been a foreman on a sisal estate) who made a point of highlighting the failure of Lihamba and his kin-neighbours to contribute (1971:260).

In November 1952 the resident *mwalimu* announced that their small mosque was in a poor state and required a new roof. Amiri and Mohammedi called a meeting to organise the work, but Lihamba and Kambi and their associates chose to boycott the meeting, possibly in order to demonstrate their alliance, and growing opposition to Amiri and Mohammedi (1971:260-1). With the start of the tobacco cultivation season a month later, Amiri and Mohammedi and most of their associates cultivated tobacco, sharing the technical knowledge between them but withholding it from those associates of Lihamba and Kambi who wished to grow the crop. Consequently, at the time of harvest their crops completely failed. Fighting broke out between the clusters at a beer-drink, and the following day someone's new house caught fire, reviving previous accusations of witchcraft (1971:261). The growing tensions were enhanced by the issue of Ndendeuli autonomy. As we will see in Chapter Seven, meetings were being held throughout the region to generate support for the movement, and when its proponents visited Namabeya in May 1953 Amiri claimed to speak on behalf of the entire community by declaring his support. Many believed that he had ambitions to become a jumbe if the movement proved to be a success (although in practice no new jumbes were appointed) and as we have seen, such an attitude was rarely appreciated. Amiri's opponents were openly scornful and accused him of "supporting the Europeans' Government, of seeking authority for himself, and of being 'like an Ngoni' and seeking merely to take their place" (1971:262). Gulliver recalls Lihamba's words: "We are all right here. The Ngoni and the Europeans too, are a long way away. There is nothing to worry about. Let us stay as we are

and let the Government stay away. Who wants to bring the Government? They will increase the tax, and they will bring new laws which we shall have to obey” (1971:262).

But that was not all. The irreversible division of segments probably took place three months later. Kambi’s son-in-law had returned from labour migration at the end of 1952 and failed to pay the requested 130 shillings for his bridewealth from his savings, giving just 55 shillings. It became apparent that he had a total of 280 shillings in a savings account for the purpose of starting a small shop in the community and as capital to trade in local produce. Amiri readily supported his idea since it fitted well with his broader vision of economic development of which tobacco production was another part. The meeting that was held to resolve this particular conflict drove the two clusters further apart, with Amiri and Lihamba as the main spokesmen for each side, and it developed into a broader argument over the pros and cons of economic development. The participants themselves realised that the community had effectively split into two factions (1971:262-3). With the destruction of their new road by rainfall in early 1954, and no chance of repair without concerted effort by the community, tobacco became unmarketable, prompting Amiri and his segment (a total of 16 households) to relocate near the main road, leaving 19 households in Namabeya with Lihamba, and the dispersal of seven other households to three pre-existing settlements (1971:264-5).

What is striking in this account is the emergence of opposing ideologies in each faction over the prospect of greater engagement with the Government and economic development. However, throughout his study, Gulliver convincingly shows how the decisions of each individual were to a considerable extent driven by the necessity to ensure mutual assistance, and ideology was thus not the basic issue at stake, which “only served as a secondary rallying point in the total process”. Nevertheless, Gulliver explains how the two segments and their respective leaders were at times identified by themselves and each other as ‘progressives’ and ‘conservatives’. Amiri had growing connections with the regions political leaders; Lihamba, we learn, was elderly, uneducated, little travelled for the previous thirty years, and said he was content with the “old ways” (1971:269). Gulliver acknowledges that the conflict over tobacco was partly ideological, to which we might add the related conflict over use of bridewealth for a shop, and the issue of Ndendeuli autonomy. However these issues became pretexts for individuals and notables to express allegiance within the segmenting community (1971:270). Gulliver clears up the significance of ideology: “...Namabeya men did not take sides specifically as ‘conservatives’ and ‘progressives’, but essentially as kin-linked supporters of a notable and in terms of their inter-dependence within the network. The ideology was, in fact, only weakly developed, although it did come realistically to represent some of the burgeoning differences of interests of a secondary kind (cash crop cultivation)” (1971:271).

While it may be that willingness to embrace modernity was not the primary issue influencing individual allegiances during the conflicts that led to the fission, the conflict was created by the arrival of new economic and political opportunities for relatively ambitious people like Amiri. By the mid-1950s these opportunities had arrived throughout Undendeuli, offering certain individuals a glimpse of a new order, even if this did not split every community down the middle as in Namabeya. The prospect of tobacco cultivation was not just an economic opportunity reducing the need to migrate to the coast. It came attached to an ideology of development requiring engagement with the wider political economy. As such it was linked to the issue of Ndendeuli secession, and many other smaller projects such as the Namabeya shop.

Gulliver stresses more than once that the segmentation of Namabeya was a rare event (1971:271). Furthermore, the impact of Lihamba's resistance to tobacco and economic development had been unusually destructive. The general trend throughout Undendeuli had been "a slow development of cash crop cultivation and a drift of settlement towards lines of communications along which agricultural produce could be transported away and consumer goods be brought in, and along which both people and news could travel" (1971:272). The historical fact is that throughout Undendeuli people were adopting the 'project of modernity' *en masse*, and in doing so they were rapidly labelled by their political leaders, and colonial officials alike, as progressive. The rare instance of a community splitting over this process indicates the power it was having on this neglected frontier region in a relatively short period of time.

Conclusions

To return to the question posed at the start of the chapter, Undendeuli was indeed 'captured' by the state through its long history of resettlement programmes that certainly increased the influence of government agents over rural populations, and their ability to involve them in social and economic development. However, this was not a one-way process of acquiescence by rural populations to demands from above. Ambitious Ndendeuli individuals actively chose to engage with the state and its associated ideology, and communities followed their lead, but only if it allowed them to continue to invest in social networks and ensure reciprocal assistance from their relations and neighbours. In this way Undendeuli society was gradually integrated with the state at the household level, through an ambivalent acceptance of its benefits.

Throughout the twentieth century the settlement histories of central Njelu and Undendeuli maintained their divergence in terms of stability of residence and land use. Resettlement programmes have increased state control at the expense of customary control over land and residence. However, the difference in stability between Njelu and Undendeuli is not usefully explained in terms of a contrast between customary control in Njelu versus state control in Undendeuli, or traditional versus modern, or indeed vice versa. Control and stability in Njelu have become institutionalised by the social and physical structures of the state and Catholic Church, while Islam and the social organisation of tobacco help to ensure that the Ngoni frontier remains fluid, and from a metropolitan perspective ‘out of control’.

Political Culture, Reform and Resistance, 1930-2002

After the Second World War, emerging Ndendeuli leaders revived previously unsuccessful claims for political autonomy that were lying dormant since their subordination to Nkosi Mbonani of Mshope in 1930. Self-rule was achieved in 1953, and two years later the Ndendeuli were providing mass support for TANU while their counterparts in Njelu and central Mshope followed reluctantly behind, in the face of hesitancy from reactionary elements in the State and the Church. As TANU grew in support and influence in these circumstances, its expression was embedded in the ethnic tensions between Ngoni and Ndendeuli. For over four decades, conflicts were contained by the shared administrative structures of the Cooperative Union and the District Council. Efforts to break up these structures came to a head in July 2002 with the establishment of the eastern frontier as a new district, and it is expected that a split in the Union will soon follow. The rise of Ndendeuli political activism, especially in the 1950s, has been interpreted by some scholars as a heroic peasant struggle against the oppressive forces of Ngoni 'feudalism' and European Imperialism.

This chapter goes beyond existing interpretations by contextualising historical events within broader regional and national trends in political development. By examining discourses of identity, politics and development, I explore the divergence in political culture in the east and west of Songea District, allowing us to assess the extent to which this is an expression of a dynamic relationship between frontier and metropole.

The First Expressions of Ndendeuli Nationalism

We saw in Chapter Three how Rashid Kombo, the German-appointed Akida at Likuyu in eastern Mshope, was removed from his post in 1930 following accusations of extortion and corruption which arguably had been fabricated by the Mshope elite (Gulliver 1954:95). With Indirect Rule firmly in place, the British administration had chosen to accept Mshope claims to historical political authority over this eastern frontier of their former Chiefdom. Nkosi Mbonani appointed his uncle, Sekamaganga, to the new post of nduna for Likuyu in 1931. This act generated immediate resentment among at least some sectors of the Ndendeuli population, and in 1933 a small delegation appealed to the Provincial Commissioner, and later to the Governor. They were referred back to the DO who informed them that “Government would not consider removal of the Chiefs”. They tried again unsuccessfully in 1934 (TNA/155/10/6, H/O Notes, 15/5/34, page 3). In retrospect the protest had little chance of success since popular support was seriously lacking, according to Gulliver because they were “still much overawed by the Ngoni” (Gulliver 1954:95). Indeed, one source states that they were “laughed out of court”.⁶⁴

This protest is remembered in present-day political discourse as a formative event in Ndendeuli nationalism – the start of a process that culminated in the granting of their own district in July 2002 (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha). Among the delegation was Hassan Mang’unyuka who came to lead the successful campaign in the early 1950s, led TANU to victory in Undendeuli, and worked as a respected District Councillor throughout the 1960s (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango; Newa 1970:20). Mang’unyuka’s involvement supports the notion explored in this chapter of a continuity in the motivations, discourses and events in Ndendeuli politics from 1931 until the present day. Ndendeuli claims for autonomy did not question the legitimacy of European rule, or even its administrative apparatus. Instead

⁶⁴ The hopelessness of isolated efforts to challenge Ngoni domination of the administration in Ungoni was demonstrated again in 1947, in what must be seen as a naïve attempt by a mission teacher, Joachim Luoga, to demand that a fellow Pangwa be appointed as nduna over the Mgazini area (north-central Njelu) where he resided. Seemingly he had no individual Pangwa in mind; but simply felt it was wrong to be ruled by outsiders. He wrote to Nkosi Korofindo requesting this change in 1947 and 1948, whose rather draconian response was to sentence him to five months’ imprisonment for contempt. Perhaps this reaction was deliberately harsh in order to send a message to any other disaffected elements. Nevertheless the sentence was reduced by the Native Court to a fine of 50 shillings, and later quashed by the DC “on the grounds that Joachim’s letters and conduct do not reveal any criminal offence”. However the DC wrote to the Peramiho Mission to ensure that Luoga was told “to confine his activities to the proper channels” (TNA/155/24/3/14, DC to Educational Secretary, OSB, Peramiho Mission, 7/10/48, *et seq.*). Rather than a fear of popular uprising, Korofindo was probably over-reacting to the audacity of this claim.

they were demanding to be recognised as a separate tribe worthy of its own Native Authority. And despite the diverse origins of their populations, political discourses began to stress the unity, homogeneity and shared history of the eastern Ndendeuli (see Chapter Two). Thus, in 1969 Hassan Mang'unyuka said that the Government in 1933 had "insisted that we Ndendeule people unite before they gave it serious consideration" (Newa 1970:20). In popular Ndendeuli consciousness, the administration had effectively told them to go away and create themselves a tribe. It will emerge in the discussion below that the period from 1933 to 1954 was a time of construction, unification and assertion of Ndendeuli ethnic identity, a process that is central to the overall thesis.

Popular Participation in Native Authority Successions, 1949-50

The succession crisis that followed the death of Nkosi Korofindo of Njelu on 12 September 1949 demonstrated the restricted participation of the wider population in Njelu Government affairs. The decision was to be made solely by the ndunas who met to discuss the matter for two days, but were divided between Laurent Fusi (the President of the Cooperative Union) and Sakrani, with rather less support for Xaver (who eventually won the post) and Simon (TNA/155/24/2/5, Minutes, 17/10/49, Maposeni). Six months later, no progress had been made, and another meeting was held, attended by about 200 people, in an atmosphere of increasing public unrest. Importantly, as part of a general post-War policy of interventionism in African development, the administration had reduced to right of the people and elders to choose a chief, and their role was now limited to making nominations to government. They had already chosen to appoint Fusi as acting nkosi, demonstrating clearly that he was their favoured candidate, and the Deputy Commissioner stated at the meeting that an incompetent successor would not be tolerated:

Government would thoroughly investigate the claims of all candidates, but the people must realise that however strong the claim of any particular candidate might be from hereditary rights, Government would not appoint him to the post of Nkosi if he was a man incapable of carrying out the responsible work of this post. It was essential that this major section of the Wangoni should have a leader capable of fulfilling the post (TNA/155/24/2/5, Minutes, 12/4/50, Maposeni).

Since October, support for Xaver had grown considerably among the ndunas and "the people", most likely as a reaction against the administration's candidate, Fusi, who was clearly not a popular choice and even described as "one of the most ruthless and authoritative rulers of Njelu" (Newa 1970:34). During this process, the limited direct participation of the

majority took the form of personal representations to individual ndunas, including two labour migrants who wrote from Mombo and Tanga to request Xaver's appointment since "he was educated and would be of comparable stature to other leaders in the territory" (quoted in Redmond 1985:190). Fusi himself was threatened more than once, presumably to persuade him to withdraw his candidacy (TNA/155/24/2/5, Minutes, 12/4/50, Maposeni). Eventually the ndunas came to an agreement. Fusi's supporters withdrew their nomination, and Xaver was selected, and installed on 11 November 1950 (TNA/155/24/2/5, DC, 1/11/50; Redmond 1985:190). In a sense, the people had triumphed over government, but their participation was through informal lobbying of the ruling elite. Nobody publicly suggested that there should be a free election; the idea would have been received as absurd.

The succession of Korofindo had been complicated, but it was resolved without disruption to the existing Njelu political order. The outcome of comparable events in Mshope turned out very differently. Perhaps the formative event in modern Ndendeuli activism came in 1950 after the death of Nduna Sekamaganga of Likuyu. Two meetings were held in Gumbiro in which Mbonani and his ndunas appointed Sekamaganga's son, Zondwako. Later the DC reported his surprise on discovering that the total attendance at these meetings had been "only fourteen!" (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 3). The selection was announced at a sizeable meeting in Likuyu whose Ndendeuli inhabitants vociferously rejected Zondwako and demanded a popular vote. Importantly, Nduna Saidi Palangu of neighbouring Mbunga supported the Ndendeuli demand for a popular election to choose the new nduna, no doubt hoping that he might extend his influence over the area. Most of the unrest appears to have originated with the population of Luegu to the west of Namtumbo, and the administration decided to solve the problem by splitting the Ndunate, with Mbonani free to appoint Zondwako over the remaining half of Likuyu while the leader of a new Luegu Ndunate was to be decided by free election.⁶⁵ They elected the Chairman of Litola Primary Society, Bilali (Redmond 1985:185). This was arguably a turning point in Ungoni political history. The DC wrote of the impact of this choice, and the decision to introduce free elections: "The wisdom of this choice is shown by the fact that Luegu from being the worst ruled area of Mshope is now probably the best" (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 3). By 1950, democracy had arrived in eastern Mshope, but certainly not Njelu. Regarding the origin of popular demands for democratic elections, we need look no further than the local

⁶⁵ The DC reported at the end of 1950: "Nkosi Mbonani is finding difficulty in maintaining the influence in some of the Mohamedan areas of his district, possibly because he is not altogether sympathetic to Mohamedanism as a religion. Quite a serious dispute between himself and the Mohamedans of Luwegu came to a head during the year and was only finally determined by the mediation of Advisor Wabu" (TNA/16/11/260A/50, SDAR 1950, pages 1-2).

primary cooperative society, one of the most vibrant in the District, which offered a working model of the process, but there were other precedents as discussed below.

The Ndendeuli Campaign for Self-Rule, 1952-54

With the death of Nkosi Mbonani on 5 November 1952, Albert Kangara was selected by a small committee consisting of the Mshope ruling elite, as had been the case in Njelu, with no formal consultation with the wider population. The committee was chaired by Amri-Mbaya, who acted as deputy, as Fusi had done in Njelu. However, another candidate emerged, Nduna Saidi Palangu, who revived his father's long-standing claims to the throne. In order to further his claim, Saidi Palangu made the unprecedented decision to renounce his membership of the ruling Tawete clan – and thus his true Ngoni identity – and adopt the Ndendeuli clan names Ponera and Ngonyani (Newa 1970:24). Throughout the region there was bitter opposition between supporters of each candidate, with Kangara favoured in the west and Palangu in the east, prompting Gulliver to write in July 1953: “Wild statements are current that if he [Kangara] does not become chief his supporters will migrate en masse to Njelu, Upangwa and Ubená” (TNA/16/37/105, Memo, 11/7/53). Again this demonstrates how people responded to illegitimate rule by ‘voting with their feet’.

Meanwhile, since the mid-1940s the popular movement against Ngoni rule had been growing stronger, boosted by the election of Nduna Bilali. With the death of Mbonani the emerging Ndendeuli leaders saw a chance to press their claim for autonomy and outwardly declared their support for Palangu. In fact, they had no desire for him to win “for he also had Swazi blood in his veins”, as Kaswera put it (Newa 1970:25), but they knew that there was no chance of him being acceptable to the Mshope elite. They were simply trying to obstruct the succession from running smoothly to give them more opportunity to communicate their claims to the Government (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango; Newa 1970:50). Three of the emerging Ndendeuli leaders – Amiri Hinduka, Nasoro Kaswera and Hassan Mang'unyuka – wrote to the DC on 20 November stating that they would be attending the meeting to decide the new nkosi (although none of them were members of the committee that would make the decision). However, instead of declaring their support for Palangu, the moment had come to declare their real objective: “the opinion of all Ndendeule is that we do not want a foreign Chief any more” (Newa 1970:26, 50). Importantly, they copied this letter, and subsequent correspondence, to various characters who were peripheral to the debate: Chief Makita of Umatengo and Akida Wabu of the Lake Shore. These were moves to keep other former subject populations on the frontiers of Ungoni informed of their activism, but the practice was soon halted by the DC (Newa 1970:46). The meeting was to be held on 18

December, and in preparation these leaders started touring the region to drum up support for their fight against “foreign domination” (Newa 1970:53). By ‘foreign’ of course, at this stage, they meant Ngoni.

The meeting lasted several days and the central issue of the Mshope succession was overshadowed by the single-minded pursuit of Ndendeuli independence by Hinduka, Kaswera and their delegation (Newa 1970:56). Needless to say, the Ngoni elders rejected their demands, and no progress was made. The DC then toured the region throughout January 1953, visiting each baraza to seek public opinion, while the Ndendeuli leaders ensured that their constituents were well prepared. Their relations with the DC, Hill, were increasingly cordial and respectful. Negotiations continued for a whole year until the decision was finally made to establish the eastern half of Mshope as a new Chiefdom – Undendeuli – comprising the ndunates of Likuyu, Luegu and Mbunga. The remnants of Mshope comprised Gumbiro, Msindo and Mahanje (Newa 1970:60). In Undendeuli, councils were established in each ndunate, with councillors chosen at elections held every three years. Representatives of each council were selected to represent their ndunate on an overall Undendeuli Council based at Namtumbo, and overseen by a President, or Nahota Nkurungwa, elected by the entire Undendeuli population. The first President was Nasoro Kaswera (Newa, 1970:64). Palangu was put forward to be Vice-President, and successfully elected. Kangara became nkosi of Mshope, and was installed on 23 January 1954 at Gumbiro. The legitimacy of his rule continued to be based upon his selection from a tiny hereditary elite, but the important point is that Kangara, and the undemocratic system that selected him, had much popular support in the west.

After self-rule had been secured, discord over the inter-divisional boundary with Mshope lasted until after National Independence in 1961. An important stumbling block to finding a quick solution was the uncompromising claim of Ndendeuli leaders to the entire eastern half of the District as far as an imagined pre-Ngoni border shared with the Matengo. Creative reworking of local histories supported these demands, which were linked to concurrent claims from the Matengo for Njelu land (Redmond 1985:199. See Chapter Two). There were also problems among communities along the proposed boundary. In Mbunga, a sizeable proportion of the population migrated to Mgombasi on the Undendeuli side of the boundary. “Now Mbunga is almost empty,” wrote Saidi Palangu to the DC (Newa 1970:67). The Namabengo population also demonstrated greater allegiance to the east, but in Kitanda they chose to remain under Mshope (Newa 1970:67). Kaswera and Kangara had failed to agree on the boundary by December 1957, and they handed over responsibility for the decision to the DC, Scott, who settled for a line following the Mbunde, Mhangazi, Kipaya and Hanga Rivers; a solution that again favoured the Ndendeuli, much to the continued

resentment of the Mshope leadership (Newa 1970:69). It appears that Mshope were justified in their claims of European favouritism towards the Ndendeuli (a thesis that is supported by respective representations of tribes explored in Chapter Three). Kangara complained again in 1959, but by then his language was sounding anachronistic (“Since long ago, I am the ruler in this country...”) and the matter was effectively closed (Newa 1970:71-2). Undendeuli had 5000 taxpayers while Mshope had 4000, and Njelu had 12,000 (Newa 1970:75); statistics which continued to represent a leader’s level of authority, and thus the considerable loss experienced by the Mshope elite and their loyal population.

Local Government Reform, 1950-55

Concurrent events elsewhere in the region allow us to put the achievements of Ndendeuli leaders in a wider context. As part of the wider post-War reforms in African development, the British introduced a programme of decentralisation to increase the base of African participation in local decision-making. Councils were introduced at district and divisional (ndunate) level, with a variety of forms, on which a certain proportion of members were elected Africans. Local responses to these reforms were markedly different in central parts of Ungoni compared to the peripheries. The Lake Shore had been administered since the advent of German rule by an alien Akida who oversaw a council of appointed local headmen, and in 1950 this region was the first in the District to carry out free elections of councillors. From the start, these reforms were a great success, prompting the DC to write:

These councils in Lake Nyasa have now been functioning for some months and are proving surprisingly successful. Elected councillors are fulfilling their role as a mouthpiece of the people and are on the executive side giving material assistance to the established Native Authorities. An example of this is that in two areas councillors have been visiting schools and interviewing parents of children not attending regularly (TNA/155/L5/13, DC, Risley, to PC, 13/11/50).⁶⁶

However, the situation in the rest of the District was unpromising:

These are very conservative peoples and the Angoni particularly have strong tribal traditions. The introduction of councils into these areas has been taken slowly and I was anxious to allow the Nyasa councils to establish themselves

⁶⁶ By the end of 1951, although the system was still working well on the Lake Shore, the new representatives on Subordinate Councils were dangerously weakening the authority of those jumbes who were not on the Divisional Council, and the constitution was changed to accommodate them (TNA/16/11/260/1951, SDAR 1951, page 5). This indicates the real impact the reforms were having on distribution of power at the village level.

first so that these more conservative peoples, and particularly the Native Authorities themselves, (who were in many cases opposed to the introduction of councils) could see for themselves how they worked. Some of the Matengo Native Authorities have visited Lake Nyasa and Advisor Wabu, a strong champion of his own councils, has widely discussed them with Angoni Native Authorities and commoners. The result is that there is now general agreement to the introduction of councils in both the Angoni and Matengo areas (TNA/155/L5/13, DC, Risley, to PC, 13/11/50).

Thus, from 1950, the idea of representative councils had become an established part of political discourse throughout the District, helping to account for the concurrent demand by Ndendeuli to select their own nduna in Luegu. One gets the impression that these reforms became a heated issue among the African 'political class' of the District, with the responses to democratic reforms of individual Native Authorities being judged and compared.⁶⁷ Ndendeuli leaders were clearly engaged with this discourse, as suggested by their decision to copy correspondence to Wabu and Makita who were evidently more receptive to the idea of councils. It was clear that Advisor Wabu had the ear of the administration, and could be a valuable ally.

Certainly the boundary problem was one reason for the slow progress in Njelu, and the decision was made to "base elections on the followers of the respective Native Authorities rather than geographically". Subordinate Councils in Ungoni were to consist of the sub-chief, and one or two official members chosen by the Native Authorities and approved by the DC, and a number of unofficial councillors (between 4 and 12) chosen from the main groups of the population (TNA/155/L5/13, DC, Risley, to PC, 13/11/50). The degree of participation was still slight, but even this was being resisted by the Ungoni ruling elite. By the end of 1951 there had been "very little progress" save the establishment of just two Subordinate Councils (TNA/155/L5/13, DC to Senior PC, 19/10/51, Progress Report on African Local Government). Slow progress in Ungoni was holding up the establishment of a Songea District Council. By the end of 1952 this had been formed, but on a very limited basis. Compared with the rest of the country, Songea was among those 13 districts listed in the lowest category of progress (TNA/155/L5/13, The Development of African Local Government in Tanganyika, n.d.).

Progress during 1953 received very negative reports (TNA/155/L5/13, DC to PC, 14/8/53, African Local Government Progress Report 1952/3). But by September 1954, after

⁶⁷ At this stage, Songea District as a whole was also behind compared to the rest of Tanganyika and was listed among the 18 districts "where no action has yet been possible" and "the highest development was that Chiefs were aggregated in a District Council". In the case of Songea, the problem was seen to be "apathy among the people towards new forms, there being adequate means of traditional consultation" (TNA/155/L5/13, Report on Development of African Local Government in Tanganyika, received Songea 3/7/50, page 6).

the tumultuous events of Undendeuli secession, the Songea District African Council was up and running with six representatives from each of the five divisions and equal input of official and unofficial members. A Chairman was elected annually by the Council. The DC was positive in his assessment: "About half of the members showed themselves capable of developing into useful representatives of the people and in one or two cases were quite outstanding in their grasp of the problems of local administration and finance" (TNA/155/L5/13, DC to PC, 5/9/54, Progress Report on Local Government). Councils were also now established in all divisions (with the exception of Umatengo due to a succession crisis), but there were fundamental differences in their authority: in Njelu and Mshope the Council was advisory to the nkosi, while in Unyanja (Lake Shore) and Undendeuli the Council was the Native Authority itself. Unsurprisingly perhaps, the DC contrasted the two pairs, and underlined differences in political culture:

The Unyanja and Undendeule Councils show promise of developing more quickly than the Angoni councils of Njelu and Mshope. It is believed that this is a direct result of the old autocratic rule of the Angoni Chiefs still being remembered by the people many of whom find it strange that they should be invited to consult with their Chief on public affairs. The pace must not be forced in Njelu and Mshope. No subordinate councils have been established but every encouragement is given to overall representation at the informal meetings held regularly by the Sub-Chiefs and the headmen (TNA/155/L5/13, DC to PC, Progress Report on Local Government, 5/9/54).

Open discussions increased the participation of the population in decision-making, with favourable results, although the DC also wrote how: "some feel that these discussions are a sign of weakness on the part of Government and have not yet realised that the days of the 'kiboko' are past" (i.e. hippopotamus hide whip used by the Germans) (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954, page 1). While Undendeuli leaders rejoiced in their new-found independence, greater representation was awakening long-standing grievances on other frontiers of the historical Ngoni State. By the end of 1954, people in the Liuli area were demanding the replacement of Advisor Wabu, the Government's most valued administrator, with a popular candidate, Jumbe Mkuu Alphonse. But the administration was not having it: "Akida Wabu is still a vigorous and able administrator and the people have been informed that at present there can be no thought of replacing him" (TNA/16/11/260A/54, SDAR 1954, page 2). Knowingly or not, the Government had encouraged a vibrant atmosphere of political change and opportunity among the wider population in the District.

The Rise of Nationalism

A Brief History of TANU in Songea District, 1955-61

In May 1955, almost a year since the establishment of TANU in Dar es Salaam, the movement for National Independence began in Songea District through the efforts of Ivor Mhaiki, a teacher at the mission school in Mbinga town, Umatengo (TNA/155/A6/4, Khainos to DC, 22/5/55).⁶⁸ Early recruits included Romanus Mkinga, an accounts clerk at the tobacco processing factory in Songea town, who later became the first Secretary of the District Branch (Mpangala 1977:129). A meeting was held on 18 August in Songea town in order to start a District Branch (TNA/155/A6/4, Tangazo, 17/8/55, Mkinga). Mhaiki reported on progress to the DC: "We have some 100 members from various places of our district... We have a subbranch in nearly every chiefdom while we intend Mbinga to be the District Headquarters at least for some time" (TNA/155/A6/4, Khainos to DC, 20/8/55). However, it was Nyerere's first visit to Songea in November 1955 that kick-started the movement in the District. His speech dispelled much of the uncertainty surrounding the prospects of success which in Songea was expressed as a fear that TANU would be brutally suppressed in the same manner as the Maji Maji rebellion, their previous attempt to overthrow colonial rule. Indeed many veterans of the rising were still alive. Support in Songea town grew quickly after his visit among an ethnically diverse urban population over which hereditary leaders had limited legitimacy or authority. Since government employees were banned from engaging in political activity its leaders and members were forced to operate in secret, and a few TANU leaders were arrested or threatened with dismissal including Mhaiki himself (Mpangala 1977:131).

News of Nyerere's visit had prompted a delegation to travel beyond Mchomoro in eastern Undendeuli to greet him on his arrival from Tunduru, and membership of this group is still a source of prestige among TANU veterans in the District. Hassan Mang'unyuka, who was now a councillor representing Undendeuli on the District Council, had just heard of TANU from Mkinga and was among these pioneers. He had wholeheartedly given his support to TANU and along with his son Mustafa is credited with bringing the movement to Undendeuli (Mkinga 1973). By February 1956 they had sufficient membership to open an Undendeuli Sub-Branch at Luegu, with Hassan standing unopposed as Chairman and Mustafa as Secretary. Crucially, this entire process was carried out in secret. Already it was clear that Nasoro Kaswera, the newly elected President of Undendeuli, had sided with the DC in a

⁶⁸ Mhaiki is referred to as Ivor Khainos in archival sources. Note that TANU had not been heard of in Songea District prior to Mhaiki's actions, except by a handful of individuals, and the movement for

campaign to suppress TANU in Undendeuli, and thus Kaswera was pitting himself against his former companion in the separatist struggle.⁶⁹ So Kaswera was not informed of the new Sub-Branch, and they applied to the DC retrospectively for permission to open it.

By this time TANU had already gained a strong foothold in Umatengo and to a lesser extent on the Lake Shore. Mhaiki was the elected President of the Songea Branch, and from July 1956 he became the District Chairman (TNA/155/A6/4, Khainos to Mkinga 24/2/56). By March 1957 eight Sub-Branches were officially recognised: Songea town; Mbinga, Kindimba and Litembo (Umatengo); Mbamba Bay, Mango and Lituhi (Lake Shore), and Peramiho (Njelu) (TNA/155/A6/4, correspondence 12/3/57). Some were much more active than others, and the slowest response had been in Njelu.⁷⁰ The Undendeuli Sub-Branch had been running covertly for over a year, and its existence was still not openly acknowledged, until now, with the surprise announcement that Hassan and Mustafa had been arrested. According to the District Police Chief, they had forced people to enter the party with the threat that their houses would be burnt down, as well as accusations of embezzlement of party funds (TNA/155/A6/4, Minutes of TANU Annual General Meeting, Songea, 17-22/3/57). According to Mkinga, their arrest had been instigated by Kaswera as part of a wider effort to instil doubt and fear, claiming that an independent administration was impossible, and that “this was the dream of just a few people – and they are mad” (Mkinga 1973). During the trial it was clear that the accusations were false, and the defendants were freed. No doubt reluctantly, the DC, Scott, registered the Luegu Sub-Branch of TANU, an action that had been awaiting the court’s decision (Mkinga 1973; Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). While this drama was unfolding, TANU leaders held a meeting in Namtumbo to counter Kaswera’s negative propaganda with a development-oriented speech about education and agriculture worthy of any European official (TNA/155/A6/4, Report of Meeting in Namtumbo, 30/3/57). A copy of the speech was sent to the DC who was “gratified to note its sensible and instructive tone” (TNA/155/A6/4, DC, Scott, to Kumbuka, 9/4/57).⁷¹

Ndendeuli independence took place without any knowledge of the emerging movement for National Independence at the national level.

⁶⁹ It appears Kaswera felt that his position was dependent on the colonial order, and this view is strengthened by several claims that the DC somehow interfered with the new Undendeuli constitution so that Kaswera was no longer up for re-election after three years. According to Hassan Mang’unyuka, the Europeans had “told us not to choose another man to replace Tanitatu [Kaswera]. They said the order had come from Governor himself, in Dar es Salaam” (Newa 1970:86).

⁷⁰ There were well over 400 members in Umatengo (mostly in Mbinga), at least 125 on the Lake Shore (but probably more than 200), 401 in Songea town and Matimira, and 56 in Peramiho (central Njelu) (TNA/155/A6/4, Minutes of Mkutano Mkuu wa Wilaya ya Songea for 1956 of TANU, 17-22/3/57).

⁷¹ In June 1958 the Mang’unyukas travelled to Dar es Salaam to inform Nyerere in person about their false accusation by the DC. A similar case had recently occurred in Musoma District where Chief Mohamed Makongoro, a great supporter of TANU, had been obstructed by his DC, Wicks. Nyerere reported both events in a critical article published in the Party newsletter *Sauti ya TANU* leading to him being sued in court. The Mang’unyukas were witnesses in Nyerere’s trial on 9 July 1958 along with six

In order to hold a public TANU meeting a letter was required from the nduna confirming that he had no objection, which was then forwarded to the Police together with a written application at least 10 days before the date of the intended meeting (TNA/155/A6/4, Officer i/c Police, to Secretary TANU, c. January 1958). Needless to say this allowed the European administration, and Native Authorities under their influence, to hinder progress. At the end of 1958, the PC noted the increasing division between the Native Authorities and “lesser leaders of TANU” throughout the Southern Province (TNA/155/last Box/Tax Matters, PC, Tubbs, to All DCs, n.d., c. December 1958). Divisions were especially apparent in Njelu where ndunas saw TANU as an additional force that threatened their legitimacy as hereditary rulers. Despite its large population and central location Njelu was still lagging behind the rest of the District. Between 17 and 21 January 1959 Nyerere visited the various centres in Songea District for a second time, including an audience with Abbot-Bishop Eberhard in Peramiho. From this moment the pace quickened, with numerous meetings throughout the District as the independence movement gained momentum and regional differences in its support were no longer clearly apparent. Independence came sooner than anybody had expected on 9 December 1961.

TANU in Undendeuli

We have seen how TANU took off quickest in Umatengo, followed by the Lake Shore, and Songea town, before sweeping through Undendeuli, and not until 1959 was significant progress made in central Njelu.⁷² The greater support for TANU in Undendeuli compared to

other TANU members from Undendeuli. Nyerere was fined 3000 shillings. Nevertheless, the outcome of these events demonstrated to the Songea population that TANU was withstanding Colonial power, and people became more confident about joining up (Mkinga 1973; Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango).

⁷² The rapid support from the Matengo was linked closely with a succession crisis in 1954 that prompted the DC to introduce a Divisional Council, chaired by him, to act as the Native Authority until the dispute was resolved. This dispute was expressed as a conflict between those supporting Chrisostomus Makita as Chief and those who were against the institution of hereditary chief altogether and demanded a free election of candidates based upon merit (Mpangala 1977:115; Gama 1980:44). Into this unstable situation arrived Mhaiki armed with his TANU membership cards in May 1955, and both factions quickly supported the movement, leaders and followers alike. In 1956, those arguing for a traditional chieftaincy sent a delegation to the Governor in Dar es Salaam and chose to channel their claim through the TANU Head Office. The outcome was that Makita did become Chief, but he enthusiastically joined TANU in that year as did his supporters who became a powerful force in the recruitment of members throughout Umatengo (Mpangala 1977:127). Meanwhile on the Lake Shore, we have seen how popular participation in Divisional and Subordinate Councils allowed expression of long-standing resentment towards Advisor Wabu, yet the Government was not prepared to lose their most valued administrator. Thus, arguably, it was TANU's commitment to democratic elections that helped to generate as much popular support for TANU on the Lake Shore (if not elsewhere) as did the still uncertain prospect of National Independence. This goal was achieved in 1958 with the removal of

Njelu and Mshope is undisputed. Even the Mshope nkosi, Kangara, readily acknowledged this when interviewed in 1969: “The Ndendeuli joined TANU early and very enthusiastically. The Namtumbo TANU committee was strong and used to meet every Friday, after prayers” (Newa 1970:83).

With only a couple of notable exceptions, TANU was introduced to Undendeuli by the same individuals who had led their secession movement. By November 1955, their self-rule had been assured, but the excitement that the movement had generated was far from extinguished. Explaining the apparent defection of Kaswera to the colonial cause reveals insights about wider tensions in the region. When recalling these events, Mustafa Mang’unyuka revealed the new insight that, at first, Kaswera had actually opposed Ndendeuli self-rule, but the decision was made by Hassan and others to persuade Kaswera to join the movement “because he had a following”, and they felt that he would divide the people if he was against them. Once he had joined, they decided to push him forward as their candidate for the Presidency “to make him even more quiet”. Also it emerged that Hassan was in fact Kaswera’s uncle. Furthermore Hassan had converted him from Christianity to Islam as part of a wider effort to bring him onto the Undendeuli side. Kaswera was very influential in Kumbara, the residence of Mbonani, and Mustafa even went so far as to say, “Basically he was pro-Ngoni rule” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Kaswera’s allegiances to both sides help account for his support for colonial rule, but also many have described how he was ‘corrupted’ by the British. Swalei described how “he was taking himself too seriously as a ruler – a typical ruler – and not a leader. He was becoming afraid of those who might work against his rule. He was defending his position and not that of the people” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town).

Many thought that Hassan should become the first President, but others saw his autonomy as a greater asset: “There may be other problems with the Government, and once Chief, and part of the colonial administration, they didn’t want him to be lost to the British. They wanted him to be a ‘free man’ who could support them” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). This remark is very revealing. The Ndendeuli leaders successfully pushed forward Kaswera as their favoured candidate for President, and similarly Saidi Palangu as Vice-President. Both men occupied highly ambivalent positions in Ngoni-Ndendeuli relations, and certainly Kaswera if not Palangu sided with the British against TANU. It is unclear whether this move indicated sophisticated political manoeuvring or a blunder that rapidly led to the ‘corruption’ of their new Native Authority to the detriment of Undendeuli governance. Soon the DC gathered together Kaswera’s allies and managed to retain his

Wabu, followed in 1959 by the popular election of Ivor Mhaiki, the bringer of TANU to the District, as

leadership without an open election. By this time popular opinion was increasingly against him:

People didn't like Tanitatu because in most issues he was on the side of government and he made no effort to defend the people's interest – so he was looked upon as another Ngoni-type of leader. Also, he didn't like elections – like the Ngoni – who wanted a hereditary system. They really regretted that they had elected him as their leader. Hassan spent quite a bit of time giving some warnings to Tanitatu but he wouldn't listen (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango).

One informant offered a valuable insight into the differential uptake of TANU in the east and west: "In Undendeuli the missionary influence was not strong, and their Chiefdom was weak – and TANU was stronger" (Josephat Mhagama, 19/7/01, Songea town). The simple notion that Njelu local government was, and still is, 'strong' compared to Undendeuli, is useful, and fits with the idea explored in Chapter Six that Njelu was a 'controlled' society with greater incorporation into the state while Undendeuli was 'out of control'. Ndendeuli egalitarianism may have been conducive to the spread of democracy, but the lack of factions, segments and hierarchy ensured that government administration struggled to gain purchase within the Ndendeuli commoner population.

TANU in Njelu

In Njelu, support for TANU was held back by the combined influence of the European Government, Native Authorities and Catholic missionaries, which pervaded the hierarchical structures of Njelu society. But it is insufficient to see this process purely as the oppression of the peasantry by a ruling class of Africans supported by European interests. Just as TANU had generated mass support in Undendeuli, Umatengo and the Lake Shore, the lack of support for TANU in Njelu reached down to the commoner population who perceived that there was little to be gained from change, at least until the movement was in full swing by 1959.⁷³ Also it would be incorrect to suggest that Ngoni were all or always against TANU, even from its start. One notable exception was Fatuma Madaka, a female descendent of Swazi origin who pioneered the movement among Songea women (Juma Mbalika, 6/7/01, Dar es Salaam). One

their new Chief (Mpangala 1977:114, 127; Gama 1980:44; Newa 1970:88).

⁷³ In Mshope, Nkosi Albert Kangara is also remembered as having sided against TANU from an early stage, forcing its promoters such as Alanus Magodi and Lucius Thonya underground. Kangara is said to have informed the Police about Magodi's activities leading to a search of his house, but unfortunately for the authorities they failed to find a single TANU card. Later Kangara joined most other Native Authorities in declaring their support when TANU's success became more likely (Gama 1980:47).

TANU pioneer in Peramiho, Peter Moyo, recalled that the commoner population in central Njelu and Mshope reacted in much the same way as their chiefs at first, and it was Nyerere's convincing speeches during his visits that quelled these fears. Interestingly, Moyo claimed that Nyerere's speeches reached only a certain audience: "the chiefs, ndunas and many members of the Government did not attend these meetings. They did not read Nyerere's speech delivered at the UN that was published and readily available in Songea, so their fears remained, and their ignorance, throughout this period (Peter Moyo, 9/7/01, Peramiho).

The story of the Mang'unyukas struggle against the combined efforts of the DC and President Kaswera in Undendeuli can be set against that of Ntimbanjaye Millinga who was the Secretary of the Peramiho Branch of the TANU Youth League between 1959 and 1960. Although not representative of the entire situation in Njelu, his experiences reveal a wider mistrust between the Church and elements within a younger generation of Africans in Njelu. Millinga was born in Lituhi on the Lake Shore into a family closely linked to the Anglican Church. Millinga heard about TANU for the first time from the Benedictines at the end of 1957 while he was studying at the Nursing School in Peramiho. This was already two years after Nyerere's first visit to Songea town, revealing how slow progress had been in Njelu. One of his regular teachers, a European priest who died in 2001, announced to the class that communists were entering the region: "There is a man, who started out good, but has now turned bad. In fact we were the ones who trained him. This man is Julius Nyerere – he is a dangerous element! We cannot do much but pray to God that he might make his mind change. So we should all pray, to ask God to do this" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 20/7/01, Peramiho). And so the class prayed. Soon Millinga discovered copies of the TANU newspaper, *Mwafrika*, and in mid-1958 he began expressing his support for Nyerere. A confrontation with his European teacher ensued and he was promptly expelled (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 20/7/01, Peramiho).

After training with TANU in Dar es Salaam he travelled to Lituhi on the Lake Shore with the intention of helping the TYL. Realising quickly that the movement was now fully established there he returned to Peramiho. Under the leadership of Cosmas Mango the Peramiho Sub-Branch was dormant (Ntimbanjaye Millinga 20/7/01, Peramiho). Mango was originally from Undendeuli, but found employment as the driver for Abbot-Bishop Gallus in the early 1940s. He gained the trust of the mission and was provided with loans to start a number of small shops in central Njelu, and contracts to supply provisions to the missions. This assistance made Mango an important figure in the local community (Cassian Njunde, 6/8/01, Peramiho). In December 1959, while TANU had forged ahead elsewhere in the District, Mango did not allow Millinga to start a Branch Office of the TYL in Peramiho, yet the effect would have been to greatly increase the membership of TANU. While it would be

wrong to suggest that Mango was a traitor, he certainly occupied a difficult position that was dependent on careful negotiation between two separate worlds.⁷⁴ In early 1960 Mango fell ill (and died later in Dar es Salaam). The TANU Branch Secretary in Peramiho told Millinga, “Use this chance to do things!” A TYL Branch was opened immediately, and, after a slow start, progress was unprecedented. By the end of 1960 there were some 18,000 members of TANU in Njelu alone, 11,000 of these joining in just one month (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 20/7/01, Peramiho).

In retrospect, this narrative appears to cast the missionaries in the role of narrow-minded oppressors, but it is important to remember the real anxieties that the movement generated, which were heightened by recent reports of Mau Mau in Kenya and brutal attacks on missions in Zaire. Iliffe notes how “missions were extensively intertwined with the Colonial State, which paid nine-tenths of their teachers’ salaries” (Iliffe 1979:546) and this economic dependence probably applied to the Benedictines in Songea as much as any mission in the country. Abbot Lambert summarised the response succinctly: “Yes, they were anxious about Independence, but on good terms with Nyerere” (Lambert Doerr, 1/8/01, Peramiho). Also it is important to note that there were a number of missionaries who were sympathetic to their aims. Very few chose to speak out publicly against TANU. Bishop Eberhard is remembered to have been a forward-looking man with new ideas and impatience with the rate of change under colonial rule. It is fair to say that he was justifiably cautious at first, but many of his anxieties were dispelled when he met Nyerere in 1959.

The Aftermath of Indirect Rule

By the beginning of 1961, the Njelu Divisional Council consisted of some 36 councillors, of whom 12 were ndunas and approximately 20 were citizens (TNA/511/NA/7, Minutes, Njellu Divisional Council, 25/1/61). The Council had spent recent months attempting to reduce the number of local courts (i.e. ndunates) and in doing so identify clear territorial boundaries between them, and thus, at last, solving the boundary problem in Njelu. They succeeded in June 1960 with a reduction from 12 courts to six. The new boundaries clearly contrast with the unworkable administrative confusion of Map 21.⁷⁵ No doubt part of the reason behind the

⁷⁴ In 1945, Cassian Njunde (who was mentioned in Chapter Six) was working as a senior clerk for the DC, Wyatt, in Songea town, and encountered a confidential letter from Dar es Salaam concerning the repatriation of all German missionaries in Tanganyika. Njunde told Mango about this letter in confidence, but Mango told the missionaries. As it happened, the letter was a false alarm and the missionaries were allowed to stay in the District (Doerr 1998:181). Again divided allegiances required diplomacy from successful Africans in Njelu.

⁷⁵ Mngaka replaced Kigonsera and Ruanda; Kilangano replaced Maposeni, Liganga and Mgazini; Mpambano replaced Majimahuhu and Lyangweni; Lumbingu replaced Mpitimbi, Mara and

strong resistance to the proposal from Nkosi Xaver was the threat of losing control over half of his funds (TNA/511/NA7, Press Release, 27/6/61). His counter proposal was for eight or nine courts, but the Njelu Council voted for just six. The nkosi refused to accept his diminished influence under the council system of government, and his objections led to the decision by the District Council to suspend his salary. Yet the Council was also acting out of turn, since it had no jurisdiction to make such a move. The division between the traditional authorities and elected councillors was evidently as strong as ever (TNA/511/NA/7, PC, Tubbs, to DC, 28/6/61).

The tensions between the Njelu nkosi and divisional councillors were being mirrored in Mshope and Undendeuli. Kaswera's failure to support TANU set him against the vast majority of his people. His councillors recommended on 31 January 1962 that he be dismissed henceforth "owing to his educational qualification and age" (Newa 1970:108). On 4 May the criticisms began to get personal: "In general our present leader has no personality... He has often been seen fighting people along the roads [...] Wherever he goes, the people have no confidence in him. His work is not good. His behaviour is not good. He does not co-operate with the councillors" (Newa 1970:86-7). Clearly, he had to go. When the institution of chief was abolished but former chiefs were invited to apply as Divisional Executive Officers, the District Council disqualified Kaswera, again on the grounds of his poor level of education (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Similarly Kangara of Mshope was discredited by his councillors for his poor performance and character (Newa 1970:102). However, he chose to support TANU in time for his acceptance by local authorities in 1963 and he remained in power in Mshope as DEO (Mustafa Mang'unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). Xaver of Njelu also reapplied successfully as DEO and was posted to the Lake Shore and then other parts of the territory before retiring to Ndirima.

Mkurumusi, Wabaki became the new name for Mkwera; Sasawala became the new name for Lusewa (TNA/511/NA/7, PC, Tubbs, to DC, Songea, "Njellu Chieftdom", 29/8/61). In August 1963 changes were made to these boundaries. It appears that Mbinga District split away from Songea District earlier in the year, with the inter-district boundary running north-south along the Mhimbasi and Upper Ruvuma Rivers. Thus, Mngaka was now entirely within Mbinga District, while Lumbingu was divided into two by the district boundary. Kilangano, Mpambano and the remaining part of Lumbingu were all amalgamated into a single Matogoro Division with its headquarters at Maposeni. Wabaki, Lukimwa (i.e. the Liger area of Wabaki) and Lusewa (i.e. Sasawala) were all amalgamated into a single Sasawala Division with its headquarters at Lusewa. By 1977 Matogoro was renamed Ruvuma Division, which it is still called (TNA/511/NA/7, Divisional Executive Officer, Zulu, to Acting Executive Officer, Songea District Council, "Mpango Mpya wa Ruvu: Division", 5/8/63). The official justification for this rationalisation was shortage of funds, since each ndunata was expected to meet certain social services, in particular primary and middle schools, as well as pay a minimum wage of 80 shillings to all government employees as demanded by the Tanganyika Association of Local Government Workers' Union. The District Council was unable to pay, claimed the DC, Manson.

Local Perspectives on Political Development, 1945-1963

Motivations behind Ndendeuli Separatism

When interviewing former separatist and TANU leaders in Undendeuli I explored the continuities between the two movements in order to account for the apparent ease of transition from one cause to the other. How did ethnic and national identities interact and express themselves among individuals living in Undendeuli and central parts of Ungoni? Can this help us understand emerging divergence in political culture in the two regions, and how did these develop over the subsequent forty years of nationalist government? A starting point for analysis is to acknowledge the deeply held, at times passionately expressed, resentment of the Ndendeuli population against their Ngoni rulers. This was not simply the attitude of an emerging elite of opportunistic politicians, but the view of the masses in the east of Mshope, as one informant explained: “Definitely all of them would have resented the Wangoni – everyone. It [Ngoni rule] would have been painful for them. But, only a minority will have thought ‘we can do something about it’” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 26/7/01, Namtumbo).

Mustafa Mang’unyuka summed up the collective feeling in the east at that time: “Mshope rule signified humiliation. They would use their administration set-up to rob peoples’ properties – goats, hens, eggs, and other things. That is why we hated that rule” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). This was a common narrative. One source asserted that Ngoni exploitation continued right up to 1952 with numerous Ndendeuli men being taken to the Native Authority barazas at Gumbiro and Mbunga as unpaid labour, while the same happened in other peripheries of Ungoni. Fukara said: “the people in Lusewa were taken to Matimira and Maposeni and Likuyu Fusi – without wages – like slaves. My father was taken – many people. The Government Court in Mbunga was built by my father, and others. They were caught, like chickens. You were unable to refuse” (Mustafa Fukara, 2/7/02, Nambecha). A related grievance was that all postholders, including the humblest of clerks, messengers and sweepers, were true Ngoni. Hassan Mang’unyuka provided related views when interviewed in 1969: “As for the Ngoni, they said they were eating from the sweat of their slaves. They organized frequent crop contributions from us. Our land was their shamba...” (Newa 1970:40). The acting nkosi, Amri-Mbaya, candidly recalled his concerns about Ndendeuli self-rule: “I insisted that the Ndendeule continue to be our subjects. They had been paying their taxes to us for a long time... And in the whole Ndendeule case, for me the taxation issue was crucial. It was necessary that I get their taxes” (Newa 1970:41). Control of tax revenues was also very important when Undendeuli split from Mshope once again in 2002 as we shall see below.

The driving passion behind the movement is clear enough. But what role did the tobacco industry or Islam have in its expression? Ndendeuli themselves have mentioned how self-rule strengthened their industrious spirit. Nawa wrote that their success “injected into the people a dynamic force”, and quoted Hassan Mang’unyuka: “After achieving our independence and land, we wanted to pull ourselves forward. Our great target was hard work and development. We accepted TANU quickly and whole-heartedly” (Nawa 1970:79). And even ex-Nkosi Kangara acknowledged that, “Generally that break has been a great motive force for progress among the Ndendeule” (Nawa 1970:94). Related to this spirit, there was a move by the Undendeuli Divisional Executive Committee at the start of 1962 to write the history of their tribe “for the remembrance of the future generations”. As Nawa suggests this was in line with other new ‘nations’, although it is significant that they were seeking to fulfil such an ethnocentric project just two months after National Independence (Nawa 1970:92). Their ‘spirit’ sustained the stereotypes of the progressive Ndendeuli, and conservative Ngoni well into the post-Independence period. Thus, Nawa writes in 1970, “The general impression I get from [regional and district level leaders] is that the Ndendeule love progress, and co-operate with leaders to attain it” (Nawa 1970:96). Could it be that this ‘spirit’ was an expression of a synergy between the rise of Ndendeuli separatism, the rise of Islam, and the rise of tobacco, each strengthening the other in a combined social and cultural movement – a conscious effort to create a new society on a neglected periphery in opposition to that found at the Ngoni centres of power?

In Chapter Four we saw how European mission activity in the east was forcefully resisted during the early 1950s with the perception that Christianity was another way in which the Ngoni would dominate them, leading to the development of Islam partly as an act of defiance against Ngoni domination. Some scholars have argued that Islam was the most important aspect of Ndendeuli identity that set them apart from Ngoni rule (e.g. Gallagher 1971, 1974), and certainly many contemporary missionaries saw Ndendeuli separatism as no less than an anti-Christian movement, with sinister anti-European and pagan undertones. Gulliver wrote how, “Islam became the rallying point of their new [tribal] nationalism. Indeed this was so much the case that the Christian members of Luegu and Mbunga Ndunates remained faithful to the Ngoni and refused the title of Ndendeuli” (Gulliver 1954:97). However, as Chapter Four demonstrated, there were many exceptions to the simple link between Islam and separatism. Undeniably, Islam was an important part of a growing sense of separateness in the east. In material terms, Gulliver noted how Ngoni customary law would

often rule against the interests of Muslims, especially regarding marriage, and this was resented in the east (Gulliver 1954:96). Importantly, Islam should not be seen as the cause of the movement, but one of the consequences that grew out of, and alongside, a pre-existing resentment. Gulliver noted this also: “This was not entirely a religious matter, however, for the old nkosi and his true-Ngoni supporters considered themselves vastly superior to their former serfs, to whom they have publicly referred as being ‘like monkeys’” (Gulliver 1954:97). Also, present-day Ndendeuli recollections of the movement downplay the significance of Islam. Ali Swalei said: “It was very little to do with the mosques. The mosques came later... The religious activities of Hinduka and Hassan Mang’unyuka took place when the independence spirit was already high” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town). Mustafa Mang’unyuka’s brother, Hussein, stated clearly: “In my opinion, the separatist movement was very much about dissatisfaction with the political and economic rule. I don’t see the connection with religious movements, but it is true that those who led the struggle were mainly Muslims... What rallied people together was the rejection of humiliation from Ngoni rule (Hussein Mang’unyuka, 26/7/01, Namtumbo).

Regarding tobacco the situation was more complex and there were multiple links with the separatist movement. Other scholars (Gallagher 1971:333, Newa 1970:93, Gulliver 1954:98, and Redmond 1985:184) have pointed out that the rise of the tobacco economy in the east gave the eastern Ndendeuli greater confidence, and a greater sense of separateness from those at the Ngoni centres of power. Can we take this further? The clearest statement on the link between tobacco and the movement came from the MP for Undendeuli, who said: “Tobacco was not because of Ndendeuli-ism! I refute that” (Pius Mbawala, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam). Other informants confirmed the idea that tobacco came first:

Rather than the movement causing people to grow more tobacco – so they could claim independence – it was the opposite. The separatist movement came after they had become economically stronger from tobacco. They realised that they could rise up because they were economically better. [...] Tobacco created the Ndendeuli. There would have been no separatist movement without it. Tobacco made it possible. It provided economic power” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town).

In passing he introduced an important and unexpected perspective on the role of tobacco. There was a strong link between tobacco marketing and the physical organisation of the movement:

After the first attempt failed to get support from the British they started underground organisations. At that time there were no villages. People lived in scattered homesteads. Therefore it demanded strong people to go around

the Ndendeuli population and get support. It was an underground movement. These people would meet at the tobacco buying posts and advance their ideas there. They would discuss with them and come up with agreements. They persuaded more people to join – not just tobacco producers. People would go to the tobacco markets, then return to their home areas and urge people to come to bigger meetings, held in Namtumbo on a certain date. [...] These meetings were secret. People didn't allow Mbonani to hear (Ali Swalei 'B', 17/7/01, Songea town).

It began in the mid-1940s while Mbonani was alive, although his death brought the movement into the open. The main tobacco markets in the east were Rwinga, Mtonya and Likuyu. "All Ndendeuli sent all their tobacco to these centres. The underground movement worked here." He elaborated: "They would stay for a number of days, sometimes weeks, for the buyers to come. So there was a big opportunity to discuss a lot of things, including [Ndendeuli] independence" (Ali Swalei 'B', 17/7/01, Songea town). Importantly, primary societies were not being used as platforms for political agitation. Instead, it was the physical act of transporting tobacco to a limited number of markets that happened to bring segments of dispersed Ndendeuli population together for the first time, to discover shared experiences, to complain about and plot against their oppressors. Another informant agreed: "As it was on the part of religion, the cooperatives were not the organising forum for the separatist movement. But, as it is known, when people are in trouble they will discuss this whenever they meet. Even when there's a funeral, for example, they would discuss oppression by Mshope. So at tobacco gatherings they discussed everything, including this" (Husseini Mang'unyuka, 26/7/01, Namtumbo).

No doubt these were gatherings of predominantly hard-working, self-reliant, male tobacco farmers with common interests and ambitions. Together they began to forge the elements of a unified, shared Ndendeuli identity – one that was constructed in opposition to their resented Ngoni rulers. Thus, Swalei said:

Before tobacco came, there was nothing that they could identify themselves with – as people to be respected. There was nothing – no schools, no hospitals. With tobacco – at least we had tobacco to be proud of. It is tobacco that has enabled us to have our children educated. [...] Tobacco brought in a lot of money – more than anything before. This opened up the doors to further change. [...] Even the political understanding came from the increased economic strength because they could concentrate on these things now that they were economically stable (Ali Swalei, 'B', 15/7/01, Songea town).

These insights begged the question whether the Ngoni leaders in central Njelu and Mshope might have endeavoured to suppress the growth of primary societies in order to ensure that

their population did not hang about in large groups, waiting to sell their tobacco, and plot against their leaders. His answer entirely dismissed the idea: “The Ngoni people had nothing to rebel against. They wouldn’t even think of organising themselves [against their leaders]. They were thinking about *ulanzi* [bamboo beer]. Also in Ungoni the societies were not strong. [...] Everyone thought that he was a ruler. There was no urging of tobacco production. It was not seen as important” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town). As explored in Chapter Five, there is only a subtle difference between this statement and the European colonial view that the Ngoni were lazy and disinterested in tobacco. Another informant confirmed the apolitical character of conversations at Njelu primary societies:

In Ungoni however they would not discuss self-rule – but they would discuss bad things about the chiefs because they would take that goat – that chicken – and say, ‘I want that goat or chicken!’ There might be some beer being prepared waiting for when people to come back from the farms and if the nduna or his wanyapara passed by he would drink all the beer with his henchmen – the *madoda*! This aggravated the peoples’ feelings. The ndunas and others in the ruling clan would even take money on the day they were paid [for their tobacco]. They would sit there and say, ‘Everyone must leave some money here!’ This created ill feeling against the ruling clan, but never so much that they would say ‘lets have self-rule.’ And they wouldn’t speak like that in front of a ruler. It was only said very privately. If they were heard saying bad words they would be put in prison (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

This was a very clear expression of the experience of Njelu rule, and my informant continued by contrasting it with eastern Mshope, where such social and political control was present, but slight in comparison:

The jumbes and wanyapara were Ndendeuli. So even if they were complaining publicly against the rulers, it would be their fellow Ndendeuli – and they would hear – and warn them: ‘If you do that behaviour we will take stern steps against you’. But it would end there – it would be just words. In Ungoni proper, the ndunas and jumbes were all Gama. So if you said anything bad about the nkosi or an nduna, you were also speaking against that particular jumbe, because he was from the same clan. It was more dangerous to speak out. It would end up being not just threats, but something practical – jailing someone (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

We need to remember that Ndendeuli living closer to Gumbiro, and in Ukena to the north, were the descendants of *sutu* who had been incorporated more fully into the Mshope State. They didn’t share such strong feelings, but also they were under greater political control. One man who grew up in Lilondo was among many others who remembered his nduna, Gerbert Ntani Mahekula of Mahanje, to have been a capable and popular leader.

Nevertheless he suggested that the Bena had feared the Ngoni Government and, like many others, the prospect of a second Maji Maji. “Maybe they secretly talked about rebellion, but they didn’t dare to do it. They were silent – maybe because they were not as politically organised as they were over there [in Undendeuli]” (Fabian Mahuwa, 2/8/01, Lilondo). Indeed, Newa concluded that the most likely explanation for the fact that the Bena did not also rise up against Ngoni rule was a “difference in political consciousness” (Newa 1970:44). But there is more to it than this. In Madaba, the present-day Bena centre in Songea District, I asked an Ndendeuli elder, Hilary Ngonyani how the Ndendeuli in Ubena had reacted. He began by reminding me that Ndendeuli were ‘really’ Ngindo of various origins, but the sense of connection between them all was apparently strong enough for the Ndendeuli in Madaba to support their cause, if only passively: “It wasn’t very easy for those Ndendeuli here to be active because this was the base of Ngoni rule” (Hilary Ngonyani, 3/8/01, Madaba). He described how the commoner population in the east resented the behaviour of the lower ranks of the Ngoni Mshope administration – the wanyapara and jumbes:

Whenever they paid a visit, those of lower rank would get those peoples’ property by force – they would rob those properties, to make preparation for the coming of the great men. This angered the Ndendeuli. [...] It was the same here, but the people were very obedient around here [...] The behaviour of the sub-rulers here was that they would discuss about the coming of the higher leaders with the people – they would say what was needed – they would say who should contribute what – not forcing them – rather, discussing with them. [However the Ndendeuli] had to be forced because they didn’t want to cooperate. The name “Wandendeuli” – it is an attitude of not cooperating. It means, “What will you do with me!?” Those people had to be forced because they really had the attitude that the rulers couldn’t do anything with them so the rulers had to force them (Hilary Ngonyani, 3/8/01, Madaba).

The fond memories of this elder Ndendeuli in Ubena to his Ngoni masters had much more in common with those of former Ngoni *madoda* in central Njelu than with their Ndendeuli counterparts in the east. This can be seen in terms of the greater social integration of Ndendeuli individuals into Ngoni Mshope society, even in this northern outpost of Mshope rule. As the discussion unfolded, an important insight was that the population around Madaba had historically consisted of a greater ‘ethnic diversity’:

There are three tribes here – the Ndendeuli, Bena and Njalila. [...] In Undendeuli proper – Namtumbo... they were basically pure Ndendeuli, with a little bit of Yao input. And the sub-chiefs and junior leaders there working for the Ngoni authority were also fellow Ndendeuli, while here the ndunas etc were all basically Ngoni... So my feeling is that, there, they were pure

Ndendeuli and there was a stronger feeling of Ndendeuli-ness than here (Hilary Ngonyani, 3/8/01, Madaba).

A valuable conclusion can be drawn from this discussion. The commoner populations around Madaba retained three major ethnic identities, while in the east they all came to be known as Ndendeuli, despite their diverse origins from throughout southern Tanzania. This unified ethnic identity in the east was created relatively recently through a combination of being labelled as such by outsiders, i.e. European and Ngoni rulers, and labelling themselves as such to reflect their shared experience of living on the frontier of Ngoni society. In the stable settlements of Ubena and Njelu the hierarchical social and political structure ensured that a range of historical *sutu* identities would be sustained by numerous vertical relations with their former Ngoni masters. In this sense central Ungoni became more metropolitan and diverse, while the eastern frontier became more homogenous in its identities, and thus potentially more unified. These observations lie at the heart of enduring differences in political culture in the east and west.

Ndendeuli Political Discourses, 1952-61

The strong feelings of antagonism to their Ngoni rulers that underlay Ndendeuli politics were reworked in official discourse into logical arguments for self-rule that would be acceptable to a modern European administration undergoing democratic reforms. The clearest statement of their intentions came to be called the 'Nahoro Declaration' on account of the location where it was made, by Kaswera and Hinduka, on 9 December 1952. Since its wording has such significance for understanding Ndendeuli political discourse, it will be translated here in full.⁷⁶

Nahoro 9/12/52. The words of the Ndendeuli are as follows below.

1. Every Ndendeuli citizen of this country here refuses to be ruled by the Ngoni, that is the Swazi. We Ndendeuli say that we do not want to be ruled by the Ngoni.

2. The Ngoni will want to know why we do not want to be ruled by them. We reply, in short, that this country is not the country of the Ngoni. As we know, the Ngoni were welcomed into this country by our elders, since 1800 until today, 1952. Now, they should remember openly, that if you lend something to someone, it is necessary to return it.

3. As we know, the Ngoni came to this country with the intention of war, and the Ndendeuli elders, as we know, were men of peace. Therefore when they saw that the Ngoni had come to create a disturbance, the

⁷⁶ See Nwa (1970:54-5) for Kiswahili original, and pages 29-30, 35, 44 and 47 for translated extracts; otherwise translated by the author.

Ndendeuli elders wanted peace for themselves. And the Ngoni were happy to encounter people who had no objection. And so the Ngoni joined those elders. And we elders of today, and the youth – if we examine our lives carefully we see that there is no reason at all for the Ngoni to travel to our country to rule it.

4. We know that the Ngoni will reply to us that they are Kings from their place. And the entire Ndendeuli people reply that we claim back our country.

5. If those Ngoni have any doubts about leaving the country that they govern, do not worry. Take your Government with you and go and govern your own country.

6. As we know, if a guest cannot live on good terms with his hosts it is natural that the hosts will make arrangements for his return to the place he came from. But if the guest lives well with his hosts they will continue treating him kindly.

7. If you do not remember that you came here to make trouble, and you expect to leave this country only after making trouble, in the manner in which you came, just try. We are ready for anything. Make trouble, but then know before hand who will be the judge. The judge will be the Great King, and he is British, who rules over the four corners of the Earth. It is he who educates us, and not the Ngoni who want to keep their subjects living in darkness.

8. We reiterate to our guests that when he comes with his luggage and after a certain period of stay decided to continue with his journey, the hosts will allow him to go with all his belongings. And it is against the rules for the host to retain the guest's belongings. That is to say, there is no likelihood for us to trouble the Ngoni with their rule or right to rule. If the Ngoni want to continue ruling this country, they should now know that the natives do not want them. We do not want our guests, until they first hand back our land they took from us. And then it is for the leaders of this land to judge whether it is fit to have you still amidst them, and decide your position then, just as is usual with guests.

9. The reason for saying this is that we find it difficult to be ruled under two kinds of domination: the Ngoni and the British. After consideration, we prefer to have one master, and that is the British. The reason for our choosing the British is that we have seen the benefits, and the reason for rejecting Ngoni domination is that we know the disadvantages.

Yours sincerely, your servants, a total of 400 Ndendeuli present at the meeting on 9/12/52, c/o Nasoro Kaswera, Amiri Hinduka.

When examined in its entirety, the Nahoro Declaration is a powerful document, not just because of its confrontational tone, but also because of the single unambiguous message – the Ndendeuli reject Ngoni rule – which is reiterated with a variety of phrases and metaphors. There is no hint of what a post-Ngoni political order might resemble, and no mention of democracy or development or indeed the Mshope succession dispute. Whether or not the Ndendeuli spokesmen had a vision of a future order, it was clearly not relevant until their basic message had been heard and accepted. Another interesting point was its reference to British rule. Given that the notion of National Independence had almost certainly not yet been countenanced by any African in Songea District, there was nothing to be gained by

criticising British rule, and indeed they were confident that the British would view their demands sympathetically. However, their perception of their position within the political order was stated unequivocally with the words “ruled under two kinds of domination”. Although the British had brought them development, while the Ngoni brought darkness, the fact was that both were seen as kinds of domination. And should the value of British rule ever be questioned, the message of the Nahoro Declaration could be redirected towards the British with no conceptual difficulty whatsoever. In a sense, the Ndendeuli were becoming politicised against domination *per se* – Ngoni or British, or indeed domination from within. This conclusion is supported by their disparaging attitude towards authoritarianism outlined at the end of Chapter Six. Yet in doing so they came to accept authority, to ‘fight them on their own terms’, with mixed consequences as we shall see.

Meanwhile, for the Ngoni elite at Gumbiro, according to Newa, “the general feeling was that the Ndendeule claims were unjustifiable, unfounded and just rebellious” (Newa 1970:58). This reaction shows how the Ngoni elite also genuinely believed that they had justice on their side. Ndendeuli claims were illegitimate because Ndendeuli was not a ‘tribe’. Now we have the active reworking of local histories, outlined in Chapter Two, by Ngoni and Ndendeuli, with conflicting representations differing over the extent to which Ndendeuli was ever a unified political entity, with its own customary laws, political institutions, and leaders. In doing so Ndendeuli emerged with a stronger more unified identity than ever before. The minutes of a Mshope Native Authority meeting held at Gumbiro in January 1953 ran as follows: “Now, as to the name or tribe or nation which demands independence we are surprised. What is it and where had it been? [...] The meeting completely refuses to hear the claim that in this country there is a ruler who calls himself an Ndendeule”. And with a sense of irony, they added: “We would ask that a new name is found so as to avoid confusion” (Newa 1970:58, cf. 36).

The argument from the Mshope elite was that the ‘true’ Ndendeuli were those who lived in the immediate vicinity of the Mshope capital, Gumbiro, i.e. the descendants of those Ndendeuli who were fully incorporated into Mshope society in pre-colonial times. According to Amri-Mbaya, acting nkosi at the time, the so-called Ndendeuli living around Namtumbo in the east were trouble-makers with no true right to the name. They were from a mixture of ethnic groups and known collectively as Hamba. For good measure, he added: “And then remember that they are a defeated tribe” (Newa 1970:36). To strengthen the legitimacy of the Ngoni counter-claim, Kangara even wrote to Dr Gulliver in Songea in May 1954, after secession had been granted, saying: “I shall be grateful if you will let me know the tribes to which the following people belong: Nasoro Kaswera (Tanitatu), Amiri Hinduka, Hassan Mang’unyuka – all of Luegu. And Faraji Lilola of Mbunga...” (Newa 1970:37). Gulliver

researched their lineages and discovered that most of them were probably Ngindo (Newa 1970:37). Yet this correspondence seems to have achieved little more than demonstrate that Gulliver and his fellow Europeans were not particularly concerned where the Ndendeuli leaders came from, since they were now confident that their decision to split the Chieftdom had been justified.

We saw from the Nahoro Declaration how Ndendeuli leaders saw domination by two rulers, Ngoni and British, to be an excessive imposition: “After consideration, we prefer to have one master, and that is the British. The reason for our choosing the British is that we have seen the benefits, and the reason for rejecting Ngoni domination is that we know the disadvantages” (Newa 1970:55). This argument was at the heart of the public discourses surrounding the movement, both at the time and in retrospect. There was nothing to show for a century of Ngoni rule, explained Ali Swalei: “The Ndendeuli argument was, if they have got nothing to offer us, why should they rule us?” Later, he added how, “No hospitals or schools were built by the Ngoni as an Authority. They were just responsible for taxing people – and giving no services in return” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town). This quote points to their feeling that they were being exploited. They believed that tax revenue from their industrious agricultural production was funding social services at the centres of power. In fact, at that time, taxes were being spent at the district level rather than by the individual Native Authorities, so that the lack of spending in Undendeuli was not directly the fault of Ngoni Mshope rule. Yet, the failure of the European administration to acknowledge the existence of Ndendeuli as a separate tribe, as discussed in Chapter Three, suggests that the Europeans were failing to provide services equitably to this outlying region. Mshope rulers were responsible for this in that they failed to represent Ndendeuli priorities. The problem lay in the lack of an Ndendeuli voice in local decision-making. Ali Swalei confirmed this point: “The people also had the idea – if we have our own man – when they meet at the district level, Undendeuli will have someone speaking for them – and he could say ‘We want more schools...’ Because there would be someone there talking on their behalf” (Ali Swalei ‘B’, 17/7/01, Songea town).

Thus, Ndendeuli leaders demanded greater participation in their government, and in doing so they wholeheartedly adopted the concept of democracy and free elections. Hassan Mang’unyuka was undoubtedly the brain behind the movement, and apart from local experiences he had also brought knowledge of democracy from his wide travels throughout the country, including Koranic studies in Zanzibar and employment as a heath worker under the Germans. “He was not an ordinary peasant – he had a wider knowledge of human society...” explained Mustafa (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). He had also acted as advisor to Mbonani on Ndendeuli affairs (Newa 1970:111). As a result the Ndendeuli were

not demanding their own hereditary Native Authorities on the basis of a reinvented tribal history – they were advocating democracy for all, not just Ndendeuli, but Ngoni as well. This is why the separatist struggle was such a ‘modern’ movement. By contrast, in 1933, the prevailing political discourses were not conducive to the notion of a democratically elected Native Authority, and so they tried to invent an Ndendeuli tradition of paramount chieftaincy. Not surprisingly they failed to gain any popular support, or official credibility. In the early 1950s Ndendeuli separatism was a struggle between traditional and modern forms of government. Mustafa Mang’unyuka summarised the key difference between the two sides: “The Ndendeuli wanted an elected leadership. The Ngoni wanted a leader out of Ungoni. *That* is tribalism. As a result the Ndendeuli wanted their own rule” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango). In other words, Ndendeuli originally suggested that a leader be chosen for, and by, the combined population of Mshope and Undendeuli, reasonably confident in the knowledge that candidate favourable to them would win. But only after the Ngoni leaders rejected this claim and insisted that the leader must be one of their own elite did the Ndendeuli demand self-rule.

Mustafa Mang’unyuka admitted that, for a brief period after self-rule had been granted, there was a movement among some Ndendeuli that all Ngoni should be systematically excluded from Undendeuli public affairs, and this trend would certainly have prevailed had it not been for the arrival of TANU, and Nyerere himself, in November 1955. He explained: “But when TANU started, that movement was left to die because TANU was encouraging national, not tribal, development. And after National Independence, the Ndendeuli never tried to promote their tribal identity. They thought TANU was advocating something more advanced”. To underscore his point, he dug out his old TANU membership card which had the three aims of the party as defined in its constitution from 1954, and pointed to the second aim: “Eliminate tribal discrimination and other obstacles that prevent unity amongst Africans, and build a nation of Tanganyikans”. His clearest expression of what happened was this: We thought the hereditary system of rule was not acceptable because it promoted Ngoni ‘tribalist’ rule. The best way to get rid of this was to develop democratic rule” (Mustafa Mang’unyuka, 27/7/01, Libango).

In order to make the transition from a separatist to a nationalist movement, a crucial shift in attitude needed to be made – and seen to be made. The Ndendeuli needed to suppress quietly the ethnic hatred that had driven their movement for self-rule, and dismantle the half-formed institutions that were arguing for ethnic purity within Undendeuli government, and return wholeheartedly to their original demand for ‘democracy for all’ – for Ngoni and Ndendeuli alike. This tension between private ethnic resentment and public support for nationalism lies at the heart of Ndendeuli political culture. It has been kept alive by

institutions that continued to straddle the two divisions, including the District Council, the Cooperative Union, and by the elections for powerful positions such as the CCM District and Regional Party Chairpersons. Today, many informants describe how Ndendeuli will automatically vote for an Ndendeuli candidate because they believe that an Ngoni candidate, like his or her colonial predecessor, will try to further the interests of the Ngoni. In contrast, the Ndendeuli believe that an Ndendeuli candidate would act in the interests of all ethnicities, and towards the development of the nation and national unity. Paradoxically the outcome is that Ndendeuli are seen by many Ngoni to be tribalists. And in this way mistrust is sustained. However, there is no denying that Ndendeuli popular support for TANU and its principles was genuine, even if ironically the national unity that it promoted was in the collective interest of Ndendeuli.

Post-Colonial Politics and the Creation of Namtumbo District

Political Culture, East and West

During the 1960s there was effectively no opportunity for leaders to gain support by appealing to any ethnic or religious group. Political discourses utterly rejected these sentiments. “No one stood to represent a tribe. They were there to represent TANU”, recalled Millinga, whose opinion was that there was noticeably more ethnic politics in present-day Tanzania (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 19/7/01, Songea town). The political climate appears to have ensured the death of ethnicity. Similarly the disbanding of the RDA outlined in Chapter Six indicated that community autonomy of any kind was not to be tolerated. But this analysis is insufficient. On one occasion I was told: “At Independence, the non-Ngoni tribes – the Ndendeuli of Songea and Matengo and Nyasa of Mbinga – worked to remove Ngoni domination” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 23/10/99, Peramiho). This is a powerful twist to the story with important consequences for understanding local politics, but it is entirely compatible with the picture that has emerged in the discussions above. Arguably, it can be seen as another manifestation of the enduring historical relationship between the Ngoni State and its pre-colonial subject peoples, in other words between the Ngoni metropole and its frontiers. The clearest expression of this process was taking place in Undendeuli. As National Independence approached, many Ndendeuli saw that the single party democracy of TANU offered a chance for all Ndendeuli to compete against the Ngoni, to dominate local politics and neutralise the Ngoni once and for all. Furthermore, they could do so in the name of national development rather than ‘narrow tribalism’ (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 14/7/01,

Peramiho). Amiri Hinduka showed how ethnic and nationalist sentiments could become so compatible:

Immediately after [National] Independence, we thought it was a good system, and started planning to render the last blow to the Ngoni clan and their stupid system of ruling. They no longer ruled parts of this country because rulers had to be elected. Those who were fit to be leaders – even from Ungoni could be posted to other parts of the District. It was the end of the Ngoni Empire (Amiri Hinduka, 28/7/01, Suluti).

There emerged a spirit of “competition for development” with their Ngoni neighbours, which was seen as entirely legitimate within the context of nationalism (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 14/7/01, Peramiho) and which arguably has been sustained ever since.

Ethnic identity in Undendeuli was delineated as a result of shared experiences on the frontier of Ngoni society, the egalitarian network structure of local communities, and a shared struggle for self-rule. The movement for National Independence in Undendeuli allowed this strong ethnic identity to be sustained, and to be expressed in terms of a multi-layered discourse of ethnic and national development, with an accompanying spirit of competition for development as they have put it. In central parts of Ungoni ethnic identities were arguably less unified, because they were divided by hierarchical relations with numerous Native Authorities and other members of the ruling families, so that smaller social groupings, such as clans, families and lineages, were more important forms of identity. How do these differences in political culture and social organisation express themselves in present-day politics? Has the political activism of Undendeuli in the 1950s been sustained, and what form does it take? Millinga gave his view:

If you talk to people about politics in Undendeuli, they will ask ‘Why? Why should we elect this person?’ But in Ungoni they are more likely to be only interested in what they will get for themselves. They are very easily persuaded to completely change direction. [...] They can easily be bought off with a few drinks. The Ngoni are the most disorganised people in Ruvuma (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 12/7/01, Peramiho).

In this view, the Ndendeuli have a strong sense of unity, but it can be to their detriment, while Ngoni identities tend to focus on the family unit rather than the ‘Ngoni’ as a whole (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 12/7/01, Peramiho). The occasions that best express these characteristics are the elections for District or Regional CCM Party Chairman. These are held every five years and have the potential to set Ndendeuli against Ngoni and Islam against Christianity. I heard from different informants how the Ndendeuli ‘competition for development’ was expressed by greater participation in these elections to increase the chances

that an Ndendeuli candidate won. Mbinga District has allegedly created more wards in order to increase their input to the elections for Regional Party Chairman and increase the likelihood that he or she is a Matengo, and not a Ngoni. Meanwhile, the Matengo may work together with Yao in Tunduru District to ensure that the successful candidate is not from Songea District. And in practice this usually means a non-Ndendeuli since they are the more politically active. The point is not so much the efficacy of these claims, but the kinds of political manoeuvring that appear to take place, and what this tells us about post-colonial political culture. However, the contrast between organised Ndendeuli activism and the divided Ngoni loyalties is particularly revealing.

Cooperative Union Politics

Perhaps the most important political debate in Undendeuli in recent years concerns the running of the Cooperative Union and its battles with the private tobacco companies over the right to purchase from the farmers (see Chapter Five). This conflict pits the tobacco farmers against the Union management and regional authorities, and to an outsider it resembles a class conflict. But to many Ndendeuli, including those elders who led them through their independence struggles, it is interpreted as an ethnic conflict. I heard repeatedly from Ndendeuli informants that the Union was controlled by the Ngoni. Representation from each primary society should be proportional to its membership, and they felt that there were many more Ngoni on the Union Management Committee than dictated by the number of Ngoni tobacco growers. Two retired Union Management Committee members reasoned that this view was not only factually wrong, but was being promoted by certain ambitious Ndendeuli leaders who wanted to ‘play the tribal card’ to attain control of the Union, and benefit from the considerable opportunities for corruption this entailed. Sanga from Msindo reminded us that their grievances were linked to the failure of the Union to pay farmers from their 2000 crop. “They fail to see that it is the Union, and they accuse the Ngoni for this situation (Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo). We pieced together a list of the origins of every Union President since elections began in 1951. Rather than a pattern of Ngoni domination, there had been alternation between Ngoni and Ndendeuli with the occasional Matengo and Yao.⁷⁷ One

⁷⁷ Names and origins of Union Presidents were recalled as follows: 1951-55 Laurent Fusi (Ngoni); 1955-57 Odo Kapinga (Matengo, from Mbinga); 1957-60 Adam Rashidi (Ndendeuli from Mtakanini); 1960-64 Faraji Asumani (Ndendeuli from Namtumbo); 1965-68 Yusuf Fungafunga (Ngoni from Liula); Then Asumani and Fungafunga alternated for about 20 years; In 1988 the Union was disbanded and a caretaker committee took over under the chairmanship of Pius Luoga (Matengo from Kigonsera); 1989-1993 Rashid Karonga (Yao from Tunduru) Coop reinstated 1989; 1993-98 Pirmin Mhowelo (Ndendeuli from Mkongo); 1998-2002 Saidi Magoto (Ndendeuli from Namtumbo) (Source: Eleuterius Sanga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

of the Ngoni Presidents, Yusuf Fungafunga, alternated with an Ndendeuli named Faraji Asumani, from 1965 to 1988. I asked how Fungafunga had managed to win the election so frequently if it was true that the majority of eligible voters were Ndendeuli with an apparently blind preference for any candidate from their own ethnic group. I was told, “He was a good tobacco grower – that’s one thing. And a very clever man. [...] The Ndendeuli never saw he was different from them. He identified more with the Ndendeuli than with the Ngoni” (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 3/8/01, Msindo).

These arguments that Ngoni were not dominating the tobacco industry failed to convince all of my Ndendeuli informants which suggested that their convictions were based on less tangible experiences. While conceding that the Ndendeuli were leading the cooperative movement at the level of the Union, one informant claimed that their leaders had been corrupted by the Ngoni elite to destroy the cooperative. “This arouses feelings among some Ndendeuli to demand a cooperative of their own”, he added, and likened the move explicitly to the separatist campaign in the 1950s. “There is a new development of a similar type. [...] In the past, people thought they were robbed by the Mshope rule, but today they are even more bitter because they think the leadership in the cooperative is robbing them even more seriously. Twelve months later, his call for a separate Union was unexpectedly answered.

The Creation of Namtumbo District, 2002

In March 2002 the President of Tanzania announced that Songea District would be divided into two, effective from 1 July.⁷⁸ This announcement came as a surprise to the residents of Songea, although a few suspected that it might happen soon since Namtumbo was growing into a small town. The presidential justification was based entirely on optimum population sizes for a district administration to function effectively. The Chairman of the District Council and the District Executive Director were given the responsibility for proposing the new boundary. In April, their proposal was agreed by a District Council meeting to which all councillors and local government staff were invited to attend, as well as interested members of the public. The proposal was then approved by a council of regional authorities, chaired by the Regional Commissioner, before being sent to the Ministry of Regional Administration and Local Government in Dar es Salaam. However the proposal was rejected. The proposed north-to-south boundary line was to be shifted further to the west so that the new Namtumbo

⁷⁸ To be precise, it was Songea Rural District, since the immediate area of Songea town had split away to form Songea Urban District around the time of Villagisation in the 1970s. Other districts were to be

District increased in size and encompassed practically the entire tobacco growing area. This represented a serious loss of revenue to the remaining portion of Songea Rural District, and was a most favourable outcome for the Ndendeuli in the east. It appears that their colonial campaign for self-rule had been repeated fifty years later.

The Songea Rural District Executive Director explained the basis to their rejected proposal. The criteria had been primarily economic and demographic, with the boundary dividing the old Songea District into two roughly equal areas and populations. It was also decided that the new Songea District should retain Msindo and Kitanda Wards in order to “raise the economic base” in the west (see Map 25). But even then, the new Songea District would be producing a total of 5438 tonnes of cash crops, while the new Namtumbo District would be producing 10,300 tonnes, based on recent figures. A third criterion was loosely labelled ‘social census’ and it is this category that was concerned with the religious and ethnic composition on each side of the divide (Songea Rural DED, Kilonzo, 18/6/02, Songea town). It is most unlikely that anything other than a north-to-south boundary was considered at any point in the planning stages, although the colonial boundary between Njelu and Mshope was of course roughly east-to-west. Although not explicitly mentioned it seems probable that the ‘social census’ concluded that a north-to-south boundary would result in greater ethnic and religious homogeneity on either side than would be the case with any other orientation.

Besides, a north-to-south boundary had a precedent in the existing parliamentary constituency boundary. In 1960 the whole of colonial Songea District was covered by a single parliamentary constituency (represented by Mhaiki). Mbinga District was split off in May 1963, and in 1965 the number of Constituencies in the remainder of Songea District increased to two: Songea North (former Mshope and Undendeuli) and Songea South (former Njelu). The boundary between them ran roughly east-to-west along the old chiefdom boundary, until around 1978 when the decision was made to reorient it in a north-to-south direction. To the west lay Peramiho Constituency and to the east lay Namtumbo Constituency. Overall, this boundary divided the central areas of former Njelu and Mshope (along with Songea town) from their eastern peripheries comprising Undendeuli and the former Njelu settlements of Ligera and Lusewa, populated largely by Muslims. The justifications for this important shift in boundary orientation remain unclear. Possibly the experience of Villagisation heightened the perceived contrast in settlement patterns between the stable west and the unstable east. In practice the reorientation heightened the division between Christian and Muslim, and Ngoni and Ndendeuli. Foremost, it was a division between frontier and metropole. In 2002 the proposed boundary between Songea and Namtumbo Districts approximated this constituency

formed at the same time (July 2002) by the division of Morogoro District and Iringa District, and

boundary established in 1978 except that Kitanda and Msindo Wards were taken from Namtumbo Constituency and included in the new Songea District, as mentioned above.⁷⁹ Map 25 shows the original proposal for district boundary and its final version, and the constituency boundary.

The most likely explanation, then, for the revision of the proposed district boundary by the ministry is that they were lobbied successfully by the MP for Namtumbo. By arguing that there should be closer affinity between district and constituency boundaries, he managed to 'reclaim' the economically productive wards of Kitanda and Msindo (Radio Nepal News, 6/02). In doing so he served the majority of his constituency very well. Schools, hospitals, development programmes and an entire district level administration would soon be developed in Namtumbo. However, the loss of revenue to the remainder of Songea District will be severe. As a rough measure of its significance, in Songea Rural District, approximately 50 percent of locally-generated revenue was derived from agriculture, of which approximately 80-90 percent was from tobacco (Songea Rural DED, Kilonzo, 18/6/02, Songea town; Sylvie Van Venrooij, 14/6/02, Songea town).⁸⁰ While it would be incorrect to blame the loss of these wards to Songea District on the MP for Peramiho, the outcome is symbolic of the enduring differences in political culture between the two regions. One informant said, "The Ndendeuli were always big players in politics due to their determination to out-do the Ngoni. This they have done successfully – and they have used this [determination] to create a new district" (Ntimbanjaye Millinga, 1/6/02, Peramiho). It is likely that the Cooperative Union will split soon as well.

Further research revealed that the Elders Council (Baraza la Wazee) in Namtumbo had been campaigning for their own district since 1996 when President Mkapa passed through Namtumbo for one night, and again in 2000. On both occasions he was approached by the Council Chairman, Kassim Kiosayaye, who asked him to grant them a district. Naturally they were very satisfied with the news. I asked why they wanted their own district, and was told: "...we didn't want a district because of our jealousy of the Ngoni – we did it to get rapid development. [...] As far as I am concerned, now there can be competition for

Arusha Region was one of two Regions that were to divide.

⁷⁹ Furthermore, although of less economic importance, Matimira Ward had also been included in the new Namtumbo District as part of the original proposal, although it was part of Peramiho Constituency. The constituency boundary will possibly now be redrawn so that Matimira becomes part of Namtumbo Constituency.

⁸⁰ Just as various border communities had resisted proposals for establishment of the Mshope-Undendeuli boundary in the late 1950s, even resulting in spontaneous migration of entire communities, there were complaints about the new district boundary. Residents of Mlilayoyo and Matimira, for example, located near to Songea town, were now expected to travel to Namtumbo to collect monthly wages, apply for permits, attend courts, or any other official business (Swithurn Chiapo, 4/6/02,

development. We want to compete. If we are separate [from the Ngoni] we can compete... We are jealous of development, not the Ngoni” (Husseini Mang’unyuka, 30/6/02, Namtumbo). These statements are remarkably similar to those expressed during the 1950s, with the same paradoxical rejection of ‘tribalism’ alongside a commitment to Ndendeuli development. It is development the Ndendeuli want, and now they have their own district they can pursue this aim with greater force, and incidentally compete successfully against the Ngoni. To some outsiders the Ndendeuli are still fighting their colonial battles. A few days later I told a resident friend in Peramiho how I was watched by everyone as I walked down the main street in Namtumbo, and how I felt more at home in Peramiho. He said: “They probably think you’re the new DC”.

The first of July came and went in Namtumbo, without speeches or ceremonies. The centre of attention for all local officials was the forthcoming official opening day for the tobacco markets throughout the region, which was to take place on 3 July in Nambecha in recognition of their high tobacco production. The special guest was the new Regional Commissioner, Brigadier General Saidi Kalembo. Traditional dancing filled the time until his entourage arrived and all were seated before the assembled crowds. He began his speech and soon came to the main message of the day:

You have asked for a district. So we have worked hard to help you beg to the Government. And the Government has agreed to give you a district, which is called Namtumbo District [ululations from the crowd]. The headquarters will be in Namtumbo – but you have to build the district. It is not me or the Government that does that – it is you yourselves. Maybe the Government can help but you yourselves must be the front-line – because when the new DC comes to Namtumbo, he cannot sleep in a grass-roofed hut! [laughter] (RC, 3/7/02, Nambecha).

There followed further exhortations about harder work, quality control, and sustainable land use, all familiar themes in official speeches since the 1930s, except with a modern twist with his closing words: “I open the markets today, and you will get your money in seven days – a lot of money. I remind you – this money is not to buy HIV!” (RC, 3/7/02, Nambecha). The light-hearted references to the stereotypical reluctance of Ndendeuli to spend their incomes sensibly were well received in this familiar performance that pitted hard work and progress against laziness and backwardness. In this respect, the Regional Commissioner knew he was preaching to the converted, and the event was a demonstration of the unity, vibrant economy, and assertive political culture of this frontier society.

Songea town). There had also been an unsuccessful movement to locate the new district centre at Mkongo rather than Namtumbo, which proved unacceptable in terms of administrative efficiency.

Conclusions

The various political events, processes and representations discussed in this chapter reveal a unified and defiant expression of Ndendeuli identity that was constructed over a relatively short period in late-colonial rule through a shared historical experience on the frontier of the Ngoni and Colonial State. The basic character of this identity has been sustained to the present-day. In contrast, Ngoni identities appear less organised and homogenised, in line with a society that continues to be segmented and closely integrated into the hierarchical, authoritarian structures of the state, and buttressed by parallel institutions of the Catholic Church. These differences can be traced to pre-colonial social and spatial organisation and linked closely to subsequent pathways of settlement change with corresponding changes in political control and administrative organisation.

The two regions have finally been separated by a district boundary, and may soon have their own cooperative unions. The fault-line between Songea and Namtumbo District can be seen to have been built up by differential interactions with successive waves of innovation – the Colonial State, the missionary Church, indigenous Islam, cash crop production, resettlement programmes, local government reform, the nationalist movement, post-colonial centralised state control, and economic liberalisation. The common thread that helps to make sense of these encounters is the notion of a dynamic relationship between the frontier and metropole of the former Ngoni State, and the divergent forms of political culture can also be seen in these terms. The concluding chapter brings together these diverse themes developed throughout the thesis and considers how patterns and trends in settlement stability might offer new ways of framing and understanding rural development trajectories in other districts within Sub-Saharan Africa.

Settlement, Livelihoods and Identity

The President's decision to divide Songea District in July 2002, and to orient the boundary along the historical 'fault-line' between Ngoni and Ndendeuli, demonstrates the continued significance of ethnic and religious identities in the post-colonial geopolitical landscape. The broad pattern of events over the last 150 years that preceded this decision are not unique to Songea. Throughout rural Africa, contiguous regions have differential rates of demographic change that are closely linked to the stability of settlement patterns, institutions and land use. These are often manifestations of broader divergences in historical pathways that are shaped by the relationship between stable centres of power and their respective frontier regions. It is this relationship between frontier and metropole that has been explored in preceding chapters through a comparison of geographical variations in response to a number of innovations in Songea history. In particular we have examined differences in the experience of pre-colonial Ngoni rule, colonial representations of African society, engagement with world religions, uptake of tobacco, implementation of resettlement programmes, social controls over land and settlement, adoption of new models of citizenship, and expression of post-colonial identities.

The Frontier Experience

Kopytoff Revisited

Perhaps the most important conclusions to be drawn from the case study concern the nature of the frontier experience in Undendeuli, in particular during Indirect Rule while Undendeuli lay on the fringes of influence from the Colonial State, Ngoni Native Authorities, and the Catholic Church. During this period, Undendeuli was an enabling environment – its scattered inhabitants were able to discover or adopt new social models and economic opportunities, or introduce them from their diverse places of origin, without fear of competition with established interests. Their choices depended upon what was available in the region at that time. From the 1920s, Islam was advancing from the east and its endogenous development

was conducive to their dispersed, egalitarian social organisation, and informal trade networks with the Indian Ocean coast. In the 1930s and 1940s, tobacco production offered the first significant alternative income source and soon became the basis of the economy. And from the 1950s new forms of citizenship offered a way to escape Ngoni oppression under Indirect Rule. These innovations originated elsewhere in the territory, and their expression in Undendeuli was the outcome of local engagement by individuals pursuing their various projects and strategies. No single source provided the model for a new social order, and no single agent or authority emerged to plan, coordinate or lead its implementation. The rise of the Ndendeuli by the mid-1950s was a 'bottom up' development in the literal (and rarely used) sense of the phrase.

Ndendeuli history, then, departs from the typological scheme of frontier ethnogenesis proposed by Kopytoff, who writes of a single ideal model, transposed from the metropole from whence the immigrants came, and applied in a purer form in an environment freed from the corrupting influences of established interests at the metropole (Kopytoff 1987:14). This narrative can be convincingly applied to the original groups of Ngoni immigrants in the mid-nineteenth century, who are said to have reproduced or adapted social and cultural materials brought from their parent polity in South Africa. However, the models and innovations adopted by the Ndendeuli during British rule certainly did not all originate at the Ngoni metropole. Although Kopytoff's narrative was focused on 'traditional' pre-colonial society, his intention was for it also to cover the colonial and post-colonial periods. Its application to these periods would be enhanced by greater acknowledgement of how an overarching territorial authority greatly expanded the size of the region from which innovations and models could originate, and thus the diversity of materials that gave rise to a coherent Ndendeuli identity by the 1950s.

There was one common formative experience that practically all Ndendeuli shared – resentment of Ngoni domination – and, as we have seen, this had a fundamental impact on their social, political and cultural history. Kopytoff downplays the significance of resistance to the metropole in the shaping of frontier history. It seems that the new frontier society in his model is located well beyond metropolitan control and its pioneers are thus relatively free from interference. Similarly, the frontier pioneers in Undendeuli were partially incorporated serfs who chose to relocate some fifty miles to the east of the Ngoni State from 1880 in search of land. These pioneers have been augmented ever since by intermittent influxes of immigrants from throughout southern Tanzania and northern Mozambique with diverse motivations and experiences. Such a history of immigration runs contrary to Kopytoff's narrative of a single group of disaffected individuals leaving the metropole, perhaps following

a succession crisis, and settling the frontier. Again this narrative fits the Ngoni *Mfecane* far better than the Ndendeuli.

A third modification to Kopytoff would be to acknowledge the efforts of colonial and post-colonial administrations to establish bounded communities governed by hierarchies of local agents, a process that is linked to closer settlement schemes and discourses of modernity. These have fundamentally shaped settlement dynamics and their relationship with social and cultural change. Thus, the structure and ideology of Indirect Rule shaped Undendeuli history during this crucial period in its history as a permissive frontier region. The appointment of a 'true' Ngoni, Sekamaganga, as their Nduna in 1930 can be seen as the starting point in their emergence as a modern society. Their appeal for political autonomy in 1933 was rejected by the British who responded by effectively telling them to go away and create themselves a tribe. Over the next 25 years the Ndendeuli did exactly that.

By 1950, the Ndendeuli had grown in size and strength, and were ready to revive their claims for self-rule. In this year, the Government happened to be promoting democratic councils and associated discourses of political development, and these new models of citizenship could be wholeheartedly adopted by the Ndendeuli, while the system that had subordinated them to the Ngoni could be rejected. Thus, Dar es Salaam was gradually replacing Mshope as a new legitimate metropole. The separatist leaders declared in 1953: "After consideration, we prefer to have one master, and that is the British". And following Nyerere's first visit to Songea in 1955, it was clear to the Ndendeuli that TANU could provide a more favourable social and political order, and they provided early support to the nationalist movement. These events resemble those described by Arens for the history of Mto wa Mbu in northern Tanzania over the same time period, as outlined in Chapter One and discussed below (Arens 1987). Had the eastern frontier of Ungoni filled with immigrants during any other period in Tanzanian history, a different society and culture would have emerged, possibly an extension of Ungoni hegemony rather than its rejection.

The Frontier Experience in Undendeuli

An important characteristic of Undendeuli by the 1950s was the relative lack of social and economic stratification, and this contributed to the unity of its emerging ethnic identity. In contrast, the segmentary, hierarchical organisation of Ngoni society helps to explain the wider range of identities that have endured since pre-colonial times, where an individual's lineage was of greater significance. This difference is reflected in political action, as one resident of Peramiho said: "The Ngoni are the most disorganised people in the region". By contrast, the Ndendeuli are seen to participate assertively in a continued battle to neutralise Ngoni control

over shared institutions such as the District Council and Cooperative Union. The divergent political cultures, identities and institutions are reflected in the contrasting kinds of historical narrative. Ngoni history is represented in terms of lineages and succession disputes of the ruling families, while Ndendeuli history can be more encompassing – “*we grew tobacco, we rose up against oppression*”. The contrasting histories of centralised Christian missions and decentralised Islamic networks in the District illustrates the point well.

Differences are also grounded in patterns of settlement and land use, and we have seen how the physical stability of central Ungoni is reflected in its institutions. Meanwhile, in Undendeuli the fluidity of its extensive shifting cultivation and settlement patterns appears to be conducive to the evolving networks and associations of immigrants, traders, Muslims, and tobacco growers. It would be a mistake to suggest a direct link between settlement stability and ‘conservative’ culture in the sense used by colonial officials of resistance to innovation *per se*. One needs only to consider the Chagga on Kilimanjaro, or Matengo in Mbinga, to find counter evidence for such a claim, and it is hard to imagine that the Ngoni would not have been ‘progressive’ coffee growers had their plateau been 500 metres higher above sea level. However, the link between conservatism and settlement stability is valid in the specific sense that more effective control – both customary and government – is exercised over land, forest and immigration in central Njelu villages. In this way, central Njelu could be described as a ‘controlled’ region, where state and society are closely integrated, while Undendeuli, at least from a metropolitan perspective, is ‘out of control’. Examination of Map 10 from the point of view of a district land use planner demonstrates this difference clearly.

The notion that the frontier is ‘out of control’ is linked to the belief that it is on the fringes of both political and moral authority. Colonial missionaries stressed the links between the eastern frontier and immorality, witchcraft, Islam, rebellion, and even tobacco production since the first thing an Ndendeuli man seemed to do with his income from tobacco was to indulge in polygamy and buy another wife. Unsurprisingly, Ndendeuli perspectives on the same characteristics were more positive, which were embodied in a project shared by many Ndendeuli households whereby tobacco, polygamy and Islam have an electoral affinity that allows them to ‘compete for development’ alongside their neighbours and against the Ngoni. Meanwhile, Ndendeuli elders recall how their parents rejected Christianity because it was imbued with the same cruel injustice and immorality they saw in Ngoni rule itself.

The idea of a frontier as a region on the fringes of the state relates to the broader project of administrative rationalisation and forced resettlement campaigns, mentioned above, which aims to integrate the periphery into the territorial economy. These interventions appear to support the notion of ‘the state capturing the peasantry’. They were undeniably planned from above and forced upon a reluctant population, but it is important to remember that

people soon came to invest in the new spatial order and contributed towards the success of the programme. The fission of Namabeya community in eastern Undendeuli in 1953 revealed how ambitious notables took advantage of the new opportunities provided by greater integration with the outside world. Entire communities followed suit, not because of an ideological commitment to modernity, but simply because individuals were trying to ensure access to networks of kin relations to assist them with economic cooperation, dispute settlement and other forms of social action. In this way Undendeuli society was gradually integrated with the state at the household level, through an ambivalent acceptance of its benefits.

The way in which government came to be introduced into Undendeuli in 1953 through a popular campaign for self-rule would at first sight hardly seem to be a case of the state capturing the peasantry. But the defection of their first elected President to join the European fight against TANU just two years later showed how quickly popular government could become an instrument of social control. After National Independence, administrative structures and programmes were homogenised, and the Ndendeuli found themselves part of a centralised developmentalist state. Again, integration provided new opportunities, and negative memories of Villagisation in Undendeuli have been dampened by an appreciation of the social developments that were able to follow in its wake, despite the environmental degradation that it has caused.

With the establishment of eastern Songea as a new district, and a new metropole at Namtumbo, it appears that the frontier has now matured. However, Yao immigrants continue to arrive from surrounding regions to settle and participate in the tobacco industry. Established Ndendeuli locals continue to leave Namtumbo and return to their pre-Villagisation residences in the bush. Pioneers settle on the fringes, form hamlets, build communities, request schools and services, and soon new villages are established and integrated into district government. Local settlement dynamics of this kind embody the same themes we have explored at the district level, but on a far smaller geographical scale. It is tempting to imagine this process as the first stages in the establishment of a new frontier society, which in turn struggles for political and cultural autonomy from Namtumbo. But this prospect would seem to be unlikely for the foreseeable future. Rather, these dynamics represent enduring structural characteristics of Undendeuli as a whole, which will ensure that the new Namtumbo District remains a frontier region for many years to come.

The comparative history of Ngoni and Ndendeuli presented here allows us to understand how the Ngoni came to be characterised as conservative and the Ndendeuli as progressive, and how these stereotypes persisted for so long. When judged in terms of willingness to grow tobacco – the basis to the District's economy – the Ndendeuli are clearly

the more productive. When political events in the 1950s are recalled by local people, again, the Ndendeuli appeared to take the initiative. Their apparent willingness to accept innovations is certainly not a consequence of their essential tribal characteristics. However, it can be linked to their shared frontier experience, especially during British rule when their culture, society and economy were being actively constructed, from the bottom up, through the uncoordinated efforts of increasing numbers of individuals, households, and communities. At the Ungoni metropolises in Njelu and Mshope, society, culture and economy were relatively well established, and buttressed by European government and missionaries. As with Christianity at the start of the twentieth century, innovations such as Islam, tobacco and democracy, were adopted under British rule by marginal peoples – literally those on the social and physical frontiers of established Ngoni society.

These conclusions are not just of academic interest; they have implications for the ways in which rural development is researched and implemented. As with tobacco in Songea District, the uptake of innovations elsewhere in rural Africa is not determined solely by agroecological or economic factors. For decades, anthropologists have been criticising development practitioners for apparently failing to consider the social contexts in which they work. One of the reasons why they fail to do so is arguably a lack of understanding of what exactly it is about the ‘context’ that needs to be considered. Understandings of the relationship between population and agrarian change continue to be loosely framed by a debate between Malthus and Boserup. In both cases, population is seen solely in economic terms and is stripped of its cultural meaning, social institutions and historical contingency. In practice, this debate does little more than justify either coercion or voluntarism in the implementation of interventions. Better understanding is needed of how certain places at certain times offer enabling environments for certain innovations to be incorporated. The notion of a frontier appears to have explanatory power in the history of Songea District and arguably elsewhere, and on a range of spatial scales. One way forward would be to theorise the relationships between settlement dynamics and social and agroecological change. A contribution towards this goal would be to carry out further comparative studies of settlement history in other rural African regions.

The Making of Identity in Mto wa Mbu

Mto wa Mbu

Of the literature on ethnicity in East Africa, the body of work by Arens on Mto wa Mbu, a “poly-ethnic rural community” in Northern Tanzania, offers particularly valuable comparative material (Arens 1973, 1975a, 1975b, 1979, 1987; Arens and Arens 1978). There are striking similarities in sociological and historical content between this settlement and Undendeuli, despite fundamental differences in their demography, economic and ecological bases, and geographical contexts, which I argue strengthens the validity of the ‘frontier’ as a concept with explanatory power in understanding ethnicity in Africa.

As introduced in Chapter One, Mto wa Mbu, in Masai-Monduli District, was one of several small settlements of internal migrants that were established in the more fertile pockets of land within the relatively barren expanses of northern Tanganyika hitherto dominated by Maa-speaking pastoralists. The first settlers arrived at the end of the First World War, and, from the start, a major attraction for further immigrants was the opportunity for irrigated banana cultivation provided by the numerous small rivers that entered nearby Lake Manyara. By the late 1960s, when Arens was conducting fieldwork, the settlement had grown into an important agricultural, trading and administrative centre of 3,500 residents in an area of some 20 square miles (Arens 1987:243). The residents were drawn from throughout northern Tanzania and represented 70 different “tribal backgrounds” (Arens 1973:442). Importantly, no single group dominated the community; at different times, the Rangi and Sukuma represented 16 and 17 percent of the population respectively (Arens 1979:48). None of the groups chose to assert their former ethnic identities, and these became largely irrelevant as categories of social organisation. This fact was most clearly represented by the high proportion of inter-ethnic marriages (Arens and Arens 1978:153). Furthermore, they appear to have abandoned their former languages and spoke Kiswahili. They referred to themselves, and in turn were referred to by others, as ‘Waswahili’ on account of their *lingua franca* (Arens 1973:443). The exception was the Chagga, representing 12.6 percent of the population in 1969, who retained their ethnic distinctiveness including use of their own language, a process that can be clearly linked to their particular economic roles: they dominated trade, bars and market stalls in the community, a range of livelihood strategies that also involved retention of socio-economic ties with their homelands on the slopes of Kilimanjaro some 100

miles away (Arens 1979:48).⁸¹ Hence, with the notable exception of the Chagga, there was a “strong sense of community identity and solidarity on the part of the residents *vis-à-vis* the inhabitants of the surrounding countryside” (Arens 1973:443).

This apparent solidarity within the community would clearly not have been the case had there been one dominant ethnic group from which immigrants had originated (Arens 1973:444). However, an additional reason, which has a bearing on understanding Ndendeuli ethnicity, was the shared livelihood strategy that was based on irrigated agriculture. This demanded both long-term commitments to the community, and unusually high levels of cooperation among its members. Commitment was required of them since irrigation was a full-time activity that was incompatible with migration, or other activities outside the community. The comparison with tobacco in Songea District is clear. As described in Chapter Five, tobacco was not conducive to labour migration, while the crop with the opposite socio-economic requirements was exemplified by cassava, a staple of Ungoni, which was compatible with a broader range of on- and off-farm activities. Social and economic ties to the homelands, such as claims to ancestral land, for individual Waswahili became “irrelevant in most cases”, and efforts were directed towards investing in social networks within Mto wa Mbu itself (Arens 1973:446).

Arens claims that, since the earliest establishment of the community in Mto wa Mbu, the irrigation system demanded the cooperation of each individual to ensure their collective success. Neighbours were necessarily co-workers, and “an emphasis on the distinctiveness of traditional ethnic identity... would pose a severe threat to village solidarity”. Arens goes further by asserting, “The community’s continued existence is predicated on a de-emphasis of potential diversity” (Arens 1973:446). Here, the comparison with Songea is less certain. Cooperation was important in Undendeuli history, as explored by Gulliver during his fieldwork in 1953, but, as examined in Chapters Five and Six, the socio-economics of tobacco do not appear to demand more cooperation between households than for other crops, and this cannot explain the apparent homogeneity of Ndendeuli identity at that time. Similarly, the successful functioning of primary societies for tobacco marketing was arguably more conducive to a homogeneous population, such as in colonial Undendeuli, but it would be wrong to suggest that Ndendeuli ethnic identity was a consequence of the active participation in primary societies. The significance of tobacco, and the marketing cooperatives, in helping to forge a unified ethnic identity in Undendeuli, as discussed in Chapter Seven, was less structural and more ideological – it was a consequence of a recognition of shared norms,

⁸¹ The role of the Chagga in Mto wa Mbu resembled in many ways that of the Yao in Songea District who chose to live separately within villages of Ndendeuli or Ngoni, and retained cultural and economic distinctiveness.

behaviours and interests, and especially a shared disdain of Ngoni rule. Tobacco marketing brought people together to discover these commonalities for the first time.

'Poly-ethnic' Social Organisation

At this point, we need to clarify what Arens means by ethnicity. His work implies that the term 'Waswahili' as applied by the residents of Mto wa Mbu to describe themselves is not an ethnic group. The 'real' ethnic groups were the traditional tribes, as defined by Gulliver (1959), from which residents originally belonged. Mto wa Mbu was to be seen as a 'poly-ethnic' community. Arens' position was demonstrated clearly through his response to Gulliver's claim that colonial rule had heightened tribal consciousness and deepened tribal difference (Gulliver 1969:16): "Mto wa Mbu provides a striking exception to this situation, since it was established during the colonial era and had a population that sought to deemphasize ethnicity" (Arens 1987:250). In contrast, I would argue that Waswahili identity in Mto wa Mbu is more usefully regarded as an ethnic identity; its emergence during British Indirect Rule was directly comparable with the emergence of Ndendeuli identity in the same period. Each case was a variation on the theme of ethnogenesis on a frontier, as modelled by Kopytoff. My difficulty with Arens' position is largely semantic. Arens was writing at a time when the notion of ethnic group was still being freed from its colonial tribal connotations, and, furthermore, for his informants the Kiswahili translation of ethnic group, *kabila*, remained synonymous with tribe. Thus, Arens notes: "It was often said that 'people from many tribes live here, but there are no tribes in Mto wa Mbu'" (Arens 1973:444).

Instead of *kabila*, the term *jamaa* was used by his informants, which had ambiguous meanings. On the one hand it referred to a "kin group related to ego both matrilaterally and patrilaterally". Such a social organisation allowed incorporation of immigrants from either matrilineal or patrilineal communities, thus broadening the kinship category of 'consanguinity' (Arens and Arens 1978:151). However, *jamaa* also applied to "all those with whom ego has a close personal relationship" including friends and neighbours. He writes: "A *jamaa* therefore is best conceived of as a personal network loosely tied together by various kinds of structural principles and in this instance expressing a generalized kinship ideology" (Arens and Arens 1978:151). This description is compatible with the earlier stages of Kopytoff's model of frontier ethnogenesis outlined in Chapter One, but it is also reminiscent of Gulliver's description of Ndendeuli non-unilineal kinship networks in 1953 (Gulliver 1971). Arens was aware of Gulliver's study and notes the similarity between Mto wa Mbu and Undendeuli with its "ethnic admixture in the subject area as a result of historical

migrations” (Arens 1973:450).⁸² However he laments Gulliver’s failure to explore its significance and for treating the Ndendeuli population as homogenous (Arens 1973:450). Arens’ criticism of Gulliver, and others, is entirely valid. Although Gulliver incorporated a diachronic dimension to his analysis of community network change over a period of some 20 years, his study was largely detached from the historical and geographical context whereby, in retrospect, those 20 years are seen to be the start of a process of community-building on a frontier that was steadily filling up with immigrants. The flexible, accommodating kinship organisation of both Mto wa Mbu and Ndendeuli are expressions of the sociology of frontier regions rather than inherent, timeless properties of particular ‘acephalous’ ethnic groups.

Another comparable dimension to social organisation in the two communities concerns the process whereby immigrants are incorporated, which in each case happened to be closely linked to the practice of Islam. Like Ndendeuli, Mto wa Mbu was predominantly Islamic, and had been since its establishment. Christians began immigrating from the 1950s, and by 1969 there were some 60 percent Muslims and 32 percent Christians (Arens 1975a:449, 451). Unlike ethnicity, religious persuasion was an extremely important factor in social organisation, with remarkably few marriages between Christians and Muslims. The former included most of the Chagga who controlled trade while the latter dominated local politics (Arens 1975a:449). From the time of its establishment, immigrants to Mto wa Mbu typically converted to Islam as part of a wider process of socialisation and acceptance by the community (Arens 1975a:451). Incorporation involved sponsorship by a practicing Muslim resident, typically in the form of a patron-client relationship resembling that between father and son. In doing so the newcomer was incorporated into the kinship network of his sponsors; conversion to Islam was his or her “visa into the social life of the community”. Meanwhile, the prestige of the sponsor was enhanced. The beliefs, practices and institutions of Islam (courts, mosques, schools) “provided a basis for community-wide organization and a common ideological basis for the expression of social relationships in a poly-ethnic setting.” Arens concludes: “In the early years of the settlement’s existence to be a member of the community was to be a Muslim” (Arens 1975a:453).

This is of course remarkably similar to the situation during late-colonial Undendeuli. Unfortunately Gulliver put no emphasis on the role of Islam, or indeed any other factors apart from kinship, in his analysis of the incorporation of newcomers, but the broad elements of Arens’ account would ring true in Undendeuli as well as Mto wa Mbu. Arguably, then, these processes of incorporation are common to other African rural frontier regions, and may even

⁸² Arens also noted the comparability of Colson (1958) on the plateau Tonga; Vincent (1971) on ethnicity in a small town; and a similar Waswahili community studied by Guillotte (1973).

be conducive to an engagement with Islam. Arens asserts that, “it is clear to any observer in Tanzania and in other parts of East Africa poly-ethnic centres have a strong Islamic character” (Arens 1975a:451). The explanation for this, as Arens notes, is partly historical, but may also be a reflection of the affinity between the decentralised networks through which Islam was practiced in much of inland East Africa and the loose social networks of ‘poly-ethnic’ settlements and other frontier communities (see Arens 1975a:454).

The Waswahili as an Ethnic Group

We have seen how the term ‘Waswahili’, as applied specifically to the residents of Mto wa Mbu, was arguably an ‘ethnic group’ comparable with Ndendeuli in Songea. Arens explored the changing meanings of the term as applied more broadly in East African history, which leads us to a discussion of the contribution of this thesis within the broader literature on African ethnicity.

Despite their wide geographical distribution along the East African coast and in isolated pockets inland, the common theme that appeared to link these disparate communities was how the term ‘Waswahili’ was typically used by their neighbours in the disparaging sense of being an alien or stranger. Another commonality was how each settlement formed a loose community through inter-ethnic marriages in the way we have described above (Arens 1975b:430). Indeed, informants told him that the “mixing of the blood” was the essential character of any Waswahili community in the region, as well as in Mto wa Mbu itself (Arens 1975b:430-1). We might suggest here that this mixing is one of the sociological characteristics of frontier regions, as defined in this thesis, and that Waswahili settlements could be regarded as examples of frontier communities. Indeed, historically, Waswahili were typically seen to comprise freed slaves and/or rootless, detribalised elements of the lowest social classes in coastal society (Arens 1975b:432), a characterisation that resembles the metropolitan view of frontier peoples more generally, as evidenced by the discourses surrounding closer settlement programmes applied to Undendeuli and discussed in Chapter Six.

The inferior status attached to the term ‘Waswahili’ explains why it was rarely a self-referent under colonial rule, and the category virtually disappeared in favour of higher status categories such as ‘Arab’ (Arens 1975b:433). However, during and after National Independence its fortunes flourished, with the devaluation of tribal, traditional and parochial political sentiments. As in Undendeuli, the Waswahili of Mto wa Mbu and other similar settlements were early and strong supporters of TANU (Arens 1975b:434). The residents of Mto wa Mbu organised the first branch of TANU in the District, and they continue to give

support to the state as evidenced by the strong presence of state institutions in the community (Arens 1987:251-2). 'Waswahili' became synonymous with modernity and sophistication while their pastoralist neighbours, the Maasai, Iraqw and Wambugwe, were increasingly seen as conservative '*watu wa kabila*' (tribespeople) who belonged in a past era (Arens 1975b:435). Arens wrote: "In addition to maintaining an ethnic boundary marker at the local level, this self-proclaimed modern outlook serves as a cultural bridge to other villages, town, and cities of Tanzania. The result is that, in a profound sense, the residents of Mto wa Mbu see themselves as *wanachi* (citizens)" (Arens 1987:252).

While urban centres are normally regarded as progressive focal points, and pioneering centres of support for TANU, Arens notes how urban residents have often retained strong ethnic loyalties, partly on account of a continued economic dependence on their rural homelands. He asserts: "It is thus the rural settlements in the backwaters of the interior 'frontier' that often stand at the edge of the wider national frontier of change" (Arens 1987:253). We can of course include Undendeuli within this claim. The prevailing stereotype of African rural communities as conservative cultural and economic backwaters is not only challenged – it is reversed.

Theorising Ethnicity in East Africa

The notion that ethnic groups are "homogenous cultural units, geographically and socially isolated from other such groups", perhaps representing different evolutionary stages in human development, has long been abandoned by scholars, despite its persistence in popular representations (Spear 1993:14). Indeed, in Chapter One we saw Kopytoff's model of ethnogenesis as diametrically opposed to that implied by this cultural view of ethnicity (Kopytoff 1987:4). Writing in the mid-1970s, Arens entered the debate soon after Barth's influential introduction to his edited collection *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Barth 1969) and Arens noted that by this time two approaches had emerged in the ways ethnicity was being theorised. One approach saw ethnic groups as culture bearing units, epitomised by Naroll's (1964) concept of the 'cult-unit'; the other, exemplified by Barth, focused on sociological factors "such as status, class, economic and ecological relations" (Arens 1975b:427). The Waswahili in their broadest geographical sense offered an excellent case study for Arens to support Barth's position, since the scattered Swahili communities, often hundreds of miles apart, had very different cultural characteristics. As we have seen, their members often defined themselves in sociological rather than cultural terms, as a mixed population of multiple origins who were defined by their new neighbours as 'aliens'.

Twenty years later, in another influential edited collection on ethnicity, Thomas Spear echoed Arens by asserting: “the academic debate has long since divided into two camps – often labelled ‘instrumentalists’ and ‘primordialists’ – focused, respectively, on the causes and effects of ethnicity” (Spear 1993:15, cf. Bentley 1987). Spear’s definitions are worth reiterating here. “Primordialists”, he explains, “assume ethnicity, its historical claims, its shared understandings, and its ability to govern social relations, as a historical artifact, and focus on trying to understand its demonstrated power in the modern world”. The focus is on the “affective power of traditional symbols to evoke deep emotional responses within individuals and collectivities” (Spear 1993:15). Examples of primordialist writings on East Africa include Gulliver’s edited collection (Gulliver 1969). Primordialists, he asserts, tend to assume that ethnicity is “anachronistically rooted in the past” and destined to “disappear in the face of development and nationalism” (Spear 1993:15).

Primordialists therefore have difficulty accounting for the upsurge of ethnicity in response to the very forces that should have brought its decline. In acknowledging this trend, we are forced to recognise that ethnicity is not necessarily rooted in the distant past, but often a more recent construct, and “capable of being ‘invented’ and manipulated in the service of one social goal or another” (Spear 1993:15). Building on Mafeje (1971) and Ranger (1983), one of the clearest recent expressions of this instrumentalist position in Africa is Vail’s *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (1989). Following Barth, instrumentalists see ethnic groups as social constructs, as with other sociological categories, formed in response to immediate needs, despite the possibility that individuals may cross the boundaries between ethnic groups. To quote Barth: “...one finds that stable, persisting, and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses” (Barth 1969:9-10). Understanding of ethnicity, then, has shifted towards “the processes by which ethnic groups are generated and maintained in opposition to other such groups” (Spear 1993:16). A study of how Ndendeuli ethnicity emerged on the frontier of Ngoni society, partly in opposition to Ngoni domination, in parallel with the rise of Islam and tobacco production, is clearly firmly rooted in the instrumentalist perspective Spear describes. The focus on inter-ethnic distinctions – the making of the Songea-Namtumbo boundary over a 120-year period – is also clearly grounded in the agenda set down by Barth and his colleagues. How has this study taken the debate further?

Much theorising on ethnicity in East Africa has focused on the Maasai pastoralists in the highlands of northern Tanzania and central and southern Kenya and their related Maa-speaking neighbours, in particular the Okeik hunter-gatherers and Arusha agriculturalists (Spear and Waller 1993, Anderson and Broch-Due 1999, Hodgson 2001). What is interesting

about this region is the relationship between ethnic and economic distinctiveness (which is reminiscent of our skewed distribution of tobacco towards the Ndendeuli populations in Songea District). Earlier interactive models of the Maasai regional economy stressed the symbiotic relations between these three groups (Berntsen 1976, Waller 1985). Galaty (1986) took this further with a process he termed “synthesis through exclusion” which established “mutually exclusive symbolic identities, arrayed around differential access to resources, which, at the same time, integrated them into an enduring complementary regional system of production and exchange” (Spear 1993:6).

The extent to which this kind of model can be transferred to understand ethnicity in Songea District is very limited, since there is nothing like the economic symbiosis between ethnic groups found among Maasai and their neighbours, despite ethnic differences in livelihood strategy. Furthermore, as Waller himself concedes, these models have their shortcomings: “They do not deal with ‘core concepts’, the intangible sets of values and ideas which shape the community’s view of itself and the world, or in what one might call the ‘moral economy of being’” (Waller 1993:294). Nevertheless, an attempt to account for the economic and ethnic differentiation between Ngoni and Ndendeuli lies at the heart of my thesis. Indeed I have extended the approach to examine the links between economic specialisation, ethnic differentiation, religious choice, settlement patterns, and political orientation, and the tricky notions of progressivism and conservatism. My approach was largely empirical, focusing in successive chapters on the relations between various factors.

To take the agenda further, argues Waller, the focus should be shifted towards examining the construction of the community, and away from the preoccupation with inter-ethnic relations. More specifically he means “the nature of Maasai ethnicity and how this has been conceived of at different times” (Waller 1993:295). In doing so the agenda also moves beyond the instrumentalist/primordialist divide by exploring what it means to belong to an ethnic group. Waller notes that Africanist scholars have been highly successful at revealing the internal differentiation of communities in terms of age, gender, and wealth, but these insights have rarely been applied to the study of ethnicity itself. Ethnic identities are still being characterised as homogeneous: “In so far as multiple identities are apparent, they are thought to be fractured or incomplete representations of a single reality” (Waller 1993: 297). One of the few writers on ethnicity in East Africa who has deconstructed its unified characterisation has been Hodgson (2001) who explores the ways in which Maasai ethnicity has been gendered throughout Tanzanian history, and reveals how the pastoralist commitment has been challenged by some Maasai women who “assert the value of agriculture in opposition to their husbands’ ‘outmoded’ attachment to stock” (Waller 1993:298). Similarly, social age and class are obvious ways in which ethnicity may be constructed differently.

These considerations may have significance for understanding social change, which may be initiated by women or other subordinated actors in the community. A key insight is the flexibility offered by the presence of multiple identities, both active and latent. In Waller's words, "There may not be a permanent hierarchy of identities, ranging from dominant to suppressed, but instead a wider repertoire from which the community may choose under changing circumstances" (Waller 1993:299).

Perhaps the study that succeeds most in examining the changing internal experience of ethnicity and community in East Africa is Bill Bravman's *Making Ethnic Ways*. As with my thesis, Bravman's general aim is to explore the emergence of a particular ethnic identity in the early twentieth century, in this case Taita in the southern Kenyan highlands (Bravman 1998:3). His focus is the 'cultural politicking' within the ethnic group itself, arguing that "the social pressures that spurred contestations and change were shaped primarily *within* local social groups" whether or not the innovation originated within or outside the community (Bravman 1998:4). Building on Waller's agenda outlined above, Bravman's point of departure is the failure of Africanists to explore intragroup tensions, with rare exceptions such as Lonsdale's exemplary work on Kikuyu ethnicity (Lonsdale 1992), and he explicitly seeks to correct this oversight. He sees this as a consequence of Africanist preoccupation with Barth's approach at the expense of internal processes (Bravman 1998:10). Vail's 'creation of tribalism' approach took the debate forward by highlighting how European and/or African elites managed to "instill and naturalize ethnic ideologies" as part of efforts to strengthen their authority. Whether or not Africans were knowingly or even cynically manipulating cultural symbols, this perspective is criticised for being overly top-down and rendering the African population too passive: "Neither scenario captures the dynamics of ethnicity, and both verge on caricatures of lived social process. They treat the power of elites as far more totalizing than is usually possible, and regard the subordinated as more guileless and malleable than recent scholarship and good sense suggest is prudent" (Bravman 1998:13).

Chapters Two and Three of this thesis explored the processes by which popular consciousness of a pre-colonial Ndendeuli identity was strengthened during the 1950s and linked to contemporary claims for self rule, and an extension of territory. While this process may have been partly conscious invention it was also a genuine reflection of local historical understandings, such was the power of ethnicity, in Spear's words, "to create a shared historical consciousness and to mobilize this in the service of modern aims" (Spear 1993:15). Regardless of the historical validity of such claims, ethnicity must not be dismissed merely as 'false consciousness' (Mafeje 1971:243-261). Thus, the primordialist concern with the power of ethnicity and its symbols, and their material effects, should not be overlooked. Indeed, Bravman argues that the distinction with instrumentalism is false, and is transcended when

the focus is on what it means to belong to the community (Bravman 1998:13). He writes: “Taita ethnicity is a historical construction that over time became a deeply felt – indeed, deeply assumed – part of people’s individual and collective identities, to the point of being internalized or embodied as an aspect of their basic ‘nature’. (Bravman 1998:14). The sense of embodiment is no less ‘real’ for being historically constructed in response to immediate needs and desires.

This perspective, which might be labelled ‘constructivist’, allows us to reinterpret some of the empirical material in the thesis. We can revisit the political struggles over control of Mgombasi School in the early 1950s, described in Chapter Four, and re-examine them as part of a cluster of related contemporary issues over what it meant to belong to the local community. In Chapter Five we explored what it meant to be an Ndendeuli tobacco farmer and began to understand the prestige attached to the successful pursuit of a ‘project’ of tobacco production, polygamy and Islamic practice in line with the progressive ideals of the developmentalist state. We can revisit Gulliver’s invaluable description of the fission of Namabeya community in 1953, described in Chapter Six, and reinterpret this also as a struggle over the meaning of community, and in doing so shed light on the relationship between socio-economic necessity and political pressures to conform. Finally, the division of the Ngoni and Ndendeuli in 1953, and again in 2002, can be reinterpreted as fundamental contestations over the changing construction of Ndendeuli identity. In doing so the thesis has transcended the instrumentalist/primordialist divide by explaining how ethnic distinctiveness emerged in Songea District, and exploring the power exercised by these opposed ethnic identities to shape local attitudes, processes and events. The original contribution of this thesis has been its attempt to show how the emergence and eventual fission of two ethnic groups was grounded in every aspect of local society, economy and culture. A framework that makes sense of this complex inter-relatedness, in Songea District and arguably elsewhere in Africa, is the dynamic relationship between settled regions and their respective frontiers.

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Appendix 1

Mapping Demographic Change

In 1935 the geographer, Clement Gillman, compiled the first accurate population map of Tanganyika Territory which was published the following year. The data was based upon correspondence with District Officers who were asked to mark populations onto sheets of the old 1:300,000 maps of German East Africa, and calculate numbers from the most recent census or tax assessment rolls, whichever was considered the more accurate (Gillman 1936:374). In Songea District the 1931 census was used which distinguished between communities under individual jumbes (headmen), each group typically comprising small scattered settlements of around 200 to 500 people (TNA/SDB; cf. TNA/155/10/6, H/O Notes, 15/5/34, for numbers of taxpayers on assessment roles for each ndunate in 1933/34). With a total population of Ungoni and Undendeuli estimated to be 49,000, there was thus a good degree of differentiation between groups to be located on a map, allowing for a useful, if impressionistic, indication of demographic spread. Gillman considered the data for Songea District to be within the top 25 percent in terms of relative reliability for the entire Territory. An enlarged version of Songea District from Gillman's population map is reproduced as Map 5. It is likely that the total population is underestimated, and more so for the population of Undendeuli than Ungoni because of its scattered distribution, and a desire at this time among the Ndendeuli to remain what James Scott (1998) would call 'illegible' to the state, and indeed the missions, in order to resist political control.

Figures for the numbers of taxpayers and total population in 1952 for each jumble within each of the 18 ndunates (sub-chiefdoms) in Ungoni and Undendeuli are given in Gulliver's *Administrative Survey* (1954:62-93) alongside a brief description of their location. The data was taken from the 1952 tax returns, and again are probably an underestimate, although what matters more is not total size but relative changes in Ungoni and Undendeuli. Using a 1954 sketch map of Songea District (UDSM/EAC and IRA), the most accurate map of the District until 1977 (and utilized during the 1967 census), I was able to plot the population distribution in 1952 which is given in Map 6. Gulliver refers in his *Administrative Survey* to "the various population maps" which would presumably resemble my version reconstructed from his data, yet his maps are missing from the only extant copy of this document (UDSM/EAC/Cory 274, Gulliver 1954:62). Apart from a general under-recording of population, reference to the 1948 census report suggests that the area in and around Songea town is likely to have been under-represented in my map. It could be corrected by including an extra six dots in Songea town, and a further five dots would need to be added elsewhere.

The 1967 census of Tanzania has been described as the most thorough and reliable to date. The population distribution in Songea for 1967 given in Map 7 was constructed by using the 1967 census base maps for Songea and neighbouring Mbinga District (UDSM/EAC) which identify the bounded areas referred to in the 1967 census reports (BRALUP 1967) and for each of which a population size is given. These maps were based upon the 1954 sketch map and thus by overlaying one onto the other it was possible to locate the likely centres of population in 1967 as a guide to plotting the distribution of people for each bounded area. To bring the total population represented on my map in line with the census results, a further ten dots would need to be added to Songea town and a further two dots added elsewhere.

Deriving the population distribution in 1978 proved to be more complicated. The 1978 Population Census Preliminary Report (Government of Tanzania 1978) only gives population for individual wards (i.e. the post-Independence equivalent of ndunates). Since this census was carried out after the Villagisation Programme in 1974 the names and locations of individual villages can be obtained with accuracy from the most recent map of Songea District (prepared in 1993, obtained from Songea District Land Office). Reports obtained from the Songea District Agricultural Office archives listed the number of households in each village, and also provided another source of total ward population (allowing for cross-

checking with census data). The ratios of ward population to total number of households gave a range of answers from 4.1 to 5.5, suggesting that there are some inaccuracies in the data. By distributing the total ward population between the various village centres on the map in the same proportion as the numbers of households in each village it was possible to derive a reasonably accurate impression of population distribution in 1978. This is presented as Map 8. Finally, Map 9 gives the population distribution for 1998 derived from population statistics for each village from current District Agricultural Office files (the same data sources as those used for the crop distribution maps described in Chapter One).

Appendix 2

Nkosis in Songea District, 1862-1962

1. *Njelu*

Hawayi	1862-74
Mharule	1874-89
Mlamilo	1889-99
Mputa	1899-1905
Usangila	1906-41
Korofindo	1941-1949
Xaver	1950-1962

2. *Mshope*

Chipeta	1862-78
Inter-regnum under Mnukwa	1878-80
Chabruma	1880-1905
Mwanawalifa	1906-15
Likotiko	1915-25
Mapoli	1925
Dominikus (Missoro Mbonani)	1926-52
Albert Kangara	1954-62

3. *Undendeuli*

Ruled by Mshope	1862-1953
President Nasoro Kaswera	1953-62

(Sources: Gulliver 1954, 1956, 1974; Redmond 1985:165; Ebner 1987).

Appendix 3

A Note on Archival Sources

The Tanzanian National Archives (TNA) in Dar es Salaam was by far the most valuable archival source for Songea District. The majority of district files were catalogued under accession number 155, which were examined systematically for this study. These also included the district books for Songea, in which successive administrators have recorded issues of interest and historical notes including much information from early Indirect Rule. This accession number also contained exhaustive files on native affairs, agriculture, and the tobacco cooperative marketing union. More recent correspondence from around the time of Independence was found under accession numbers 511 and 504. These contained much material on agriculture and local government that had previously not been seen by researchers. The provincial files, catalogued under number 16, were of less value with the exception of the surviving district annual reports for the 1950s, which were particularly important. Similarly, use of the secretariat files (SEC) was largely restricted to the annual reports from the early 1920s. Both sets of files were examined extensively for correspondence on Songea District by Redmond in the late 1960s and his study (Redmond 1985) proved most helpful for locating material from these sources.

Rhodes House Library, Oxford, also has many of the Tanganyikan district books on microfilm, including for Songea, as well as a copy of an important report on the Songea tobacco industry (Northcote and McGregor 1940) which can also be found in TNA. Similarly a copy of the key oral history of Ndendeuli collected in the 1930, and quoted in Chapter Two, can be found in both locations. Rhodes House also contains published copies of the Provincial Commissioners' reports.

The East Africana Collection (EAC) at the University of Dar es Salaam Library has a copy of Gulliver's *Administrative Survey* (Gulliver 1954), as part of its Cory Collection. This appears to be the only copy still in existence. Photocopying of Cory materials is forbidden, but the Director of the Library generously accepted my request to prepare a microfiche of Gulliver's report, which will be given to the University of Edinburgh Library for future researchers. EAC is extensively stocked with other 'grey literature' including Gulliver 1955, BRALUP 1967, Tanganyikan/Tanzanian Notes and Records, census reports, maps (including those used for the 1967 census), and several theses on Songea history including Nawa 1970 (also in the University of Edinburgh Library). The Institute of Resource Assessment at the University has a good collection of reports and maps and it was here that I found the maps of east and west Songea District, prepared in 1954.

Finally, the archives at Peramiho Mission were not examined, and must hold much invaluable material for future researchers. However, the Abbot generously provided a selection of the published chronicles of the St Ottilien Congregation from the British colonial period for my consultation. The chronicles are written entirely in German and were photocopied in Peramiho and later translated in UK. Of those that I have quoted in the thesis, the citations in the text have been written as follows: Kitanda Chronicle, 1955; Ligera Chronicle, 1950, 1954, 1955; Mtyangimbole Chronicle, 1950, 1951, 1952 and 1954; Namabengo Chronicle, 1938, 1945; Peramiho Chronicle, 1955; Songea Chronicle, 1939. The full citations are given below. Apart from Peramiho Mission itself, it is expected that all of these sources would be available for consultation in the Benedictine archives at St. Ottilien.

KITANDA CHRONICLE 1955

Chronik von Kitanda, Grundung bis Ende 1954.

(Pages 222-233 in Chronik der Kongregation von St Ottilien 1955.)

LIGERA CHRONICLE 1950

Chronik der Missionstation Ligera (Ostafrika), Von der Grundung 1937 bis Ende 1949.

(Pages 222-244 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1950.)

LIGERA CHRONICLE 1954

Chronik von Ligera, 1950 bis Ende 1953.

(Pages 342-348 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1954.)

LIGERA CHRONICLE 1955

Chronik von Ligera, Januar bis November 1954.

(Pages 219-222 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1955.)

MTYANGIMBOLE CHRONICLE 1950

Chronik der Missionstation Mtyangimbole (Ostafrika):

I. Teil: Grundung und Ausbau bis Ende 1940.

(Pages 202-210 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1950.)

II. Teil: Januar 1941 bis Juli 1944.

(Pages 210-217 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1950.)

Dritter Teil: Juli 1944 bis Februar 1946.

(Pages 217-224 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1950)

Vierter Teil: Februar 1946 bis März 1948.

(Pages 224-230 in: Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1950)

MTYANGIMBOLE CHRONICLE 1951

Chronik der Missionstation Mtyangimbole (Ostafrika), März 1948 bis März 1950.

(Pages 73-79 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1951.)

MTYANGIMBOLE CHRONICLE 1952

Chronik von Mtyangimbole (Ostafrika), April 1950 bis August 1951.

(Pages 44-52 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1952.)

MTYANGIMBOLE CHRONICLE 1954

Chronik von Mtyangimbole, August 1951 bis Ende 1953.

(Pages 333-341 in Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1954.)

NAMABENGO CHRONICLE 1938

Grundungschronik von Namabengo, Jahr 1912 bis Jahr 1938.

(Pages 117-126 in Chronik von Peramiho, Band 7 Stationschroniken, 1937-1940. Auszüge aus: Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien.) [Unpublished collection of published extracts, bound by Peramiho Mission.]

NAMABENGO CHRONICLE 1954

Chronik von Namabengo, Oktober 1938 bis Ende 1952.

(Pages 37-48 in Chronik der Kongregation von St Ottilien 1954.)

PERAMIHO CHRONICLE 1955

Chronik von Peramiho, Februar 1939 bis Ende 1954.

(Pages 1-46 in Chronik der Benediktiner-Kongregation von St. Ottilien 1955.)

SONGEA CHRONICLE 1939

Chronik von Songea, Jahr 1930-1939.

(Pages 168-184 in Chronik von Peramiho, Band 7 Stationschroniken, 1937-1940. Auszüge aus: Chronik der Kongregation von St. Ottilien.) [Unpublished collection of published extracts, bound by Peramiho Mission].

Appendix 4

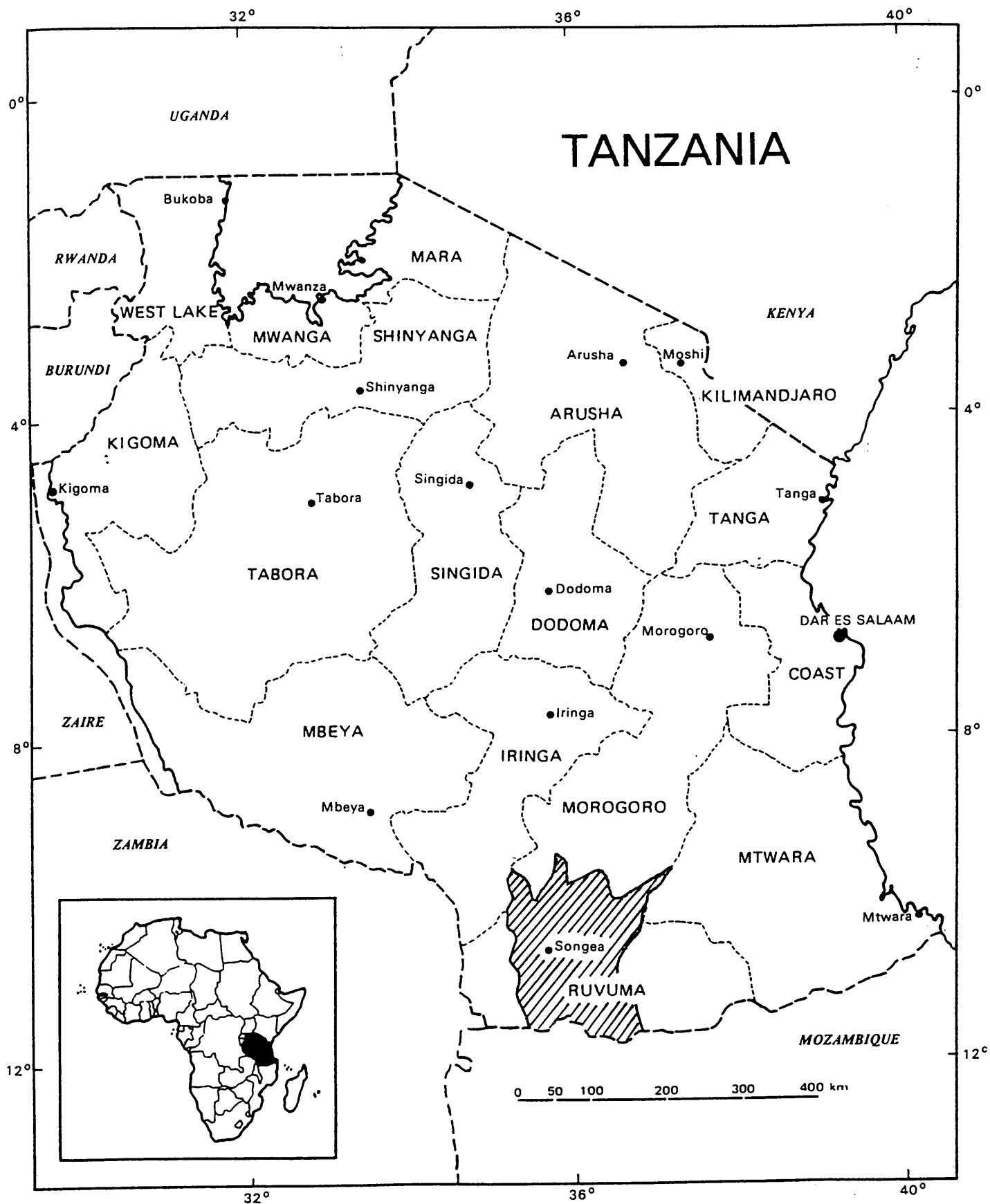
List of Interviewees

Interviews, oral histories and informal conversations were carried out with approximately 200 people in Tanzania, normally on a one-to-one basis. From these, I have quoted from 75 conversations with 46 people, as listed below. All locations cited are within Songea District with the exception of Dar es Salaam and Iringa. Conversations were recorded by hand as fieldnotes made at the time of interview, and written up as transcripts as soon as possible after the event. These are available for consultation by contacting the author.

Chiapo, Swithurn, 31/5/02, Namtumbo; 4/6/02, Songea town; 20/6/02, Maposeni; 20/6/02, Namtumbo; 29/6/02, Namtumbo; 2/7/02, Namtumbo; 6/7/02 Namtumbo.
Doerr, Abbot Lambert, 1/8/01, Peramiho; 15/6/02, Peramiho.
Egit, Alois, 12/7/01, Litisha.
Egit, Augustin, 12/7/01, Litisha.
Fukara, Mustafa, 2/7/02, Nambecha; 5/7/02, Nambecha.
Gama, Daniel, 22/6/02, Maposeni.
Gunda, Rabia, 22/5/00, Namtumbo.
Hinduka, Amiri, 28/7/01, Suluti.
Kanduru, Saidi, 30/6/02, Namtumbo.
Kilonzo, DED Songea Rural, 18/6/02, Songea town.
Kumburu, Germanus, 10/7/01, Magima.
Kuyuyila, Shaibu, 23/6/02, Maposeni.
Lindi, Monica, 8/4/00, Liyangweni; 7/8/01, Songea town.
Luambano, Bacha, 1/7/02, Mgombasi.
Mahuwa, Fabian, 2/8/01, Lilondo.
Mang'unyuka, Mustafa, 27/7/01, Libango.
Mang'unyuka, Hussein, 26/7/01, Namtumbo; 27/7/01, Libango; 30/6/02, Namtumbo.
Matengo man, 6/7/02, Namtumbo.
Mbalika, Juma, 6/7/01, Dar es Salaam.
Mbawa, Imelda, 2/12/99, Parangu.
Mbawala, Professor Pius, 28/8/01, Dar es Salaam.
Mbawala, Siamini, 25/6/02, Maposeni.
Mhagama, Josephat, 19/7/01, Songea town.
Mhaiki, Paul, 14/8/01, Matagoro.
Millinga, Ntimbanjaye, 28/4/00, Peramiho; 23/10/99, Peramiho; 18/11/00, Peramiho; 9/7/01, Peramiho; 12/7/01, Peramiho; 14/7/01, Peramiho; 19/7/01, Songea town; 20/7/01, Peramiho; 26/7/01, Namtumbo; 1/8/01, Peramiho; 3/8/01, Msindo; 1/6/02, Peramiho; 14/6/02, Peramiho; 26/6/02, Peramiho.
Moyo, Peter, 9/7/01, Peramiho.
Mpepo, Romanus, 25/6/02, Maposeni.
Mwakimi, Anneth, 24/2/00, Dar es Salaam
Mwalle, Florence, 27/11/00, Songea town.
Ndiwu, Matiselius, 23/6/02, Maposeni.
Ndomba, Ester, 20/11/00, Peramiho.
Ngonyani, Hilary, 3/8/01, Madaba.
Ngonyani, Lukas, 27/5/00, Songea town; 11/11/00, Songea town.
Njunde, Cassian, 6/8/01, Peramiho; 31/7/01, Peramiho; 11/7/01, Peramiho.
Nyoni, Sabinus, 23/6/02, Maposeni.
Paul, Joyce, 22/5/00, Namtumbo.
Rwamuhuru, Anton, 18/8/01, Iringa town.
Salla, Prudencia, 27/11/00, Songea town.

Sanga, Eleuterius, 3/8/01, Msindo.
Satu, Otmar, 24/6/02, Maposeni.
Shawa, Elenzian, 20/6/02, Maposeni.
Swalei, Ali 'A', 10/7/01, Magima.
Swalei, Ali 'B', 17/7/01, Songea town.
Tibesana, Experancia, 24/2/00, Dar es Salaam.
Tindwa, Francis, 27/11/00, Songea town; 18/6/02, Songea town.
Van Venrooij, Sylvie, 14/6/02, Songea town.

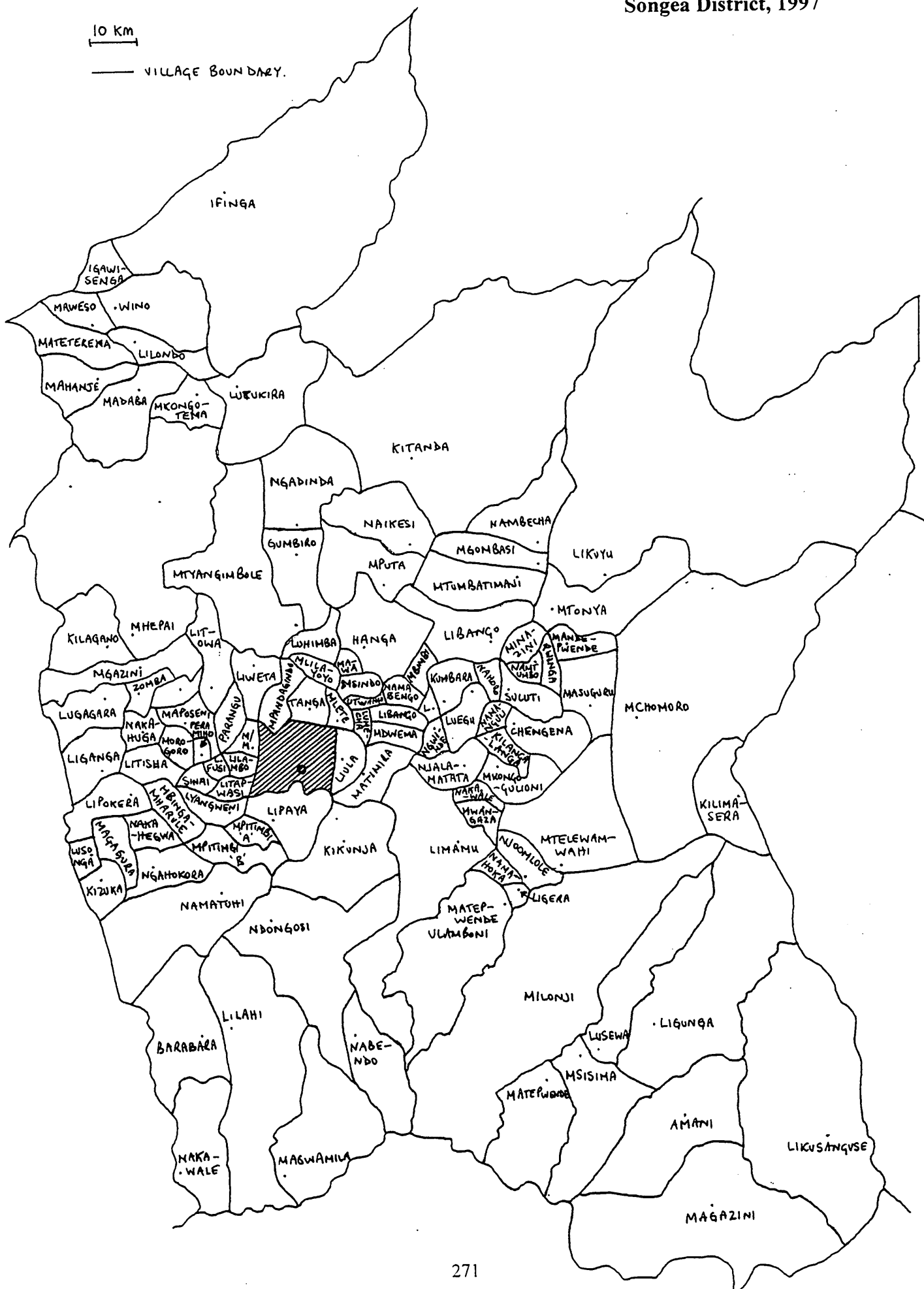
MAP 1
Tanzania: Administrative Regions and Songea District, 1963-2002



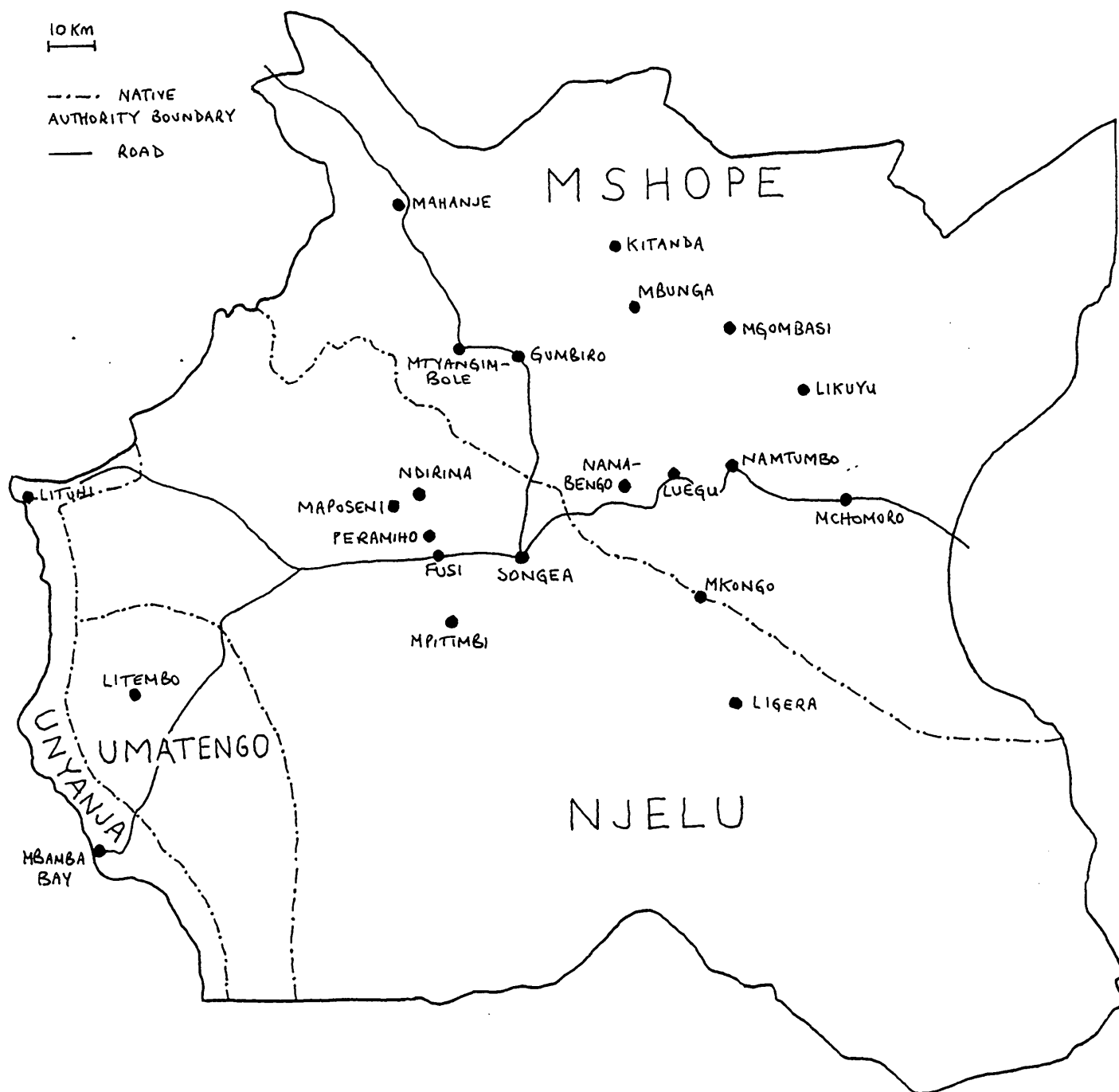
MAP 2



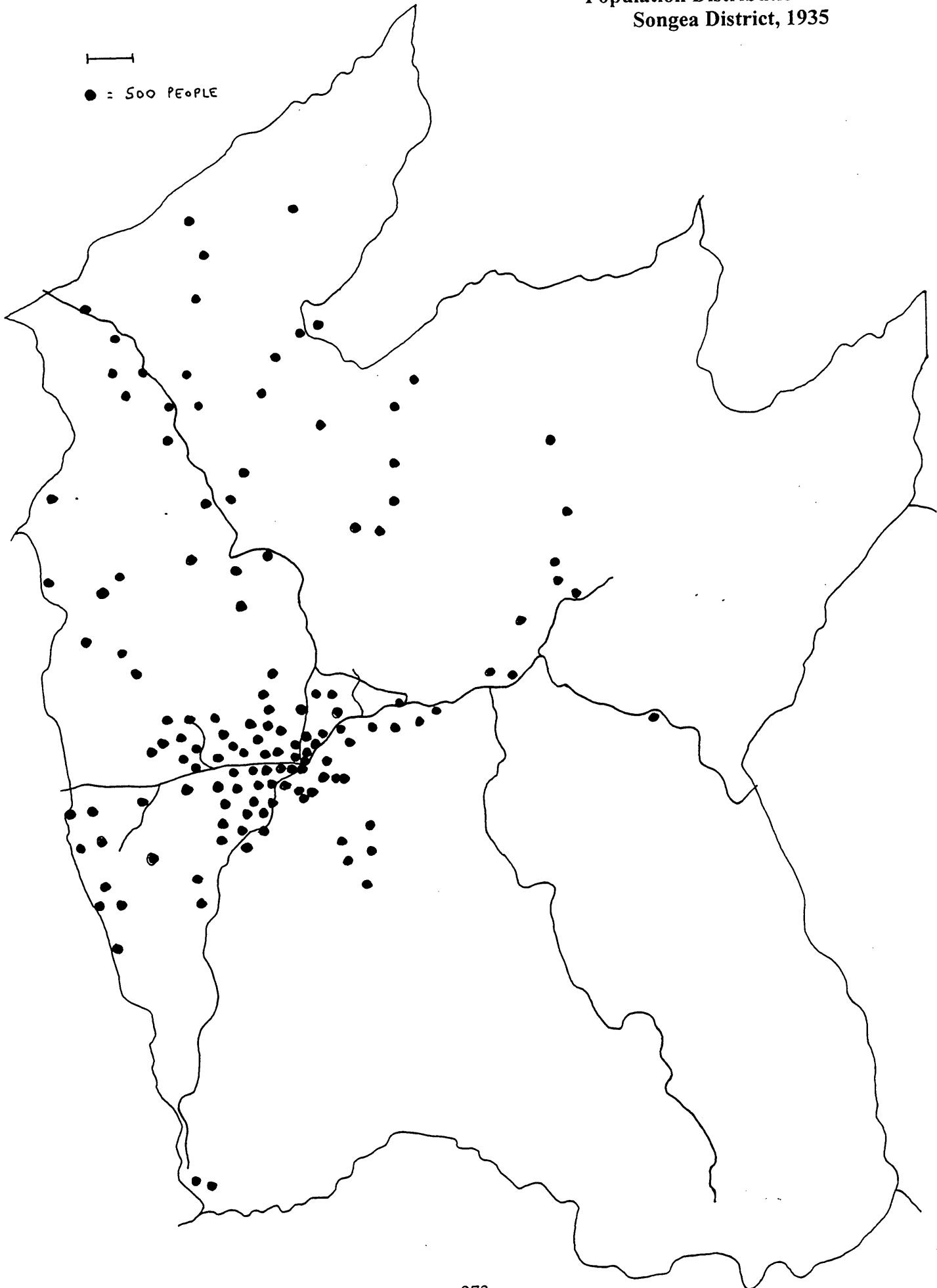
10 km
—— VILLAGE BOUNDARY.



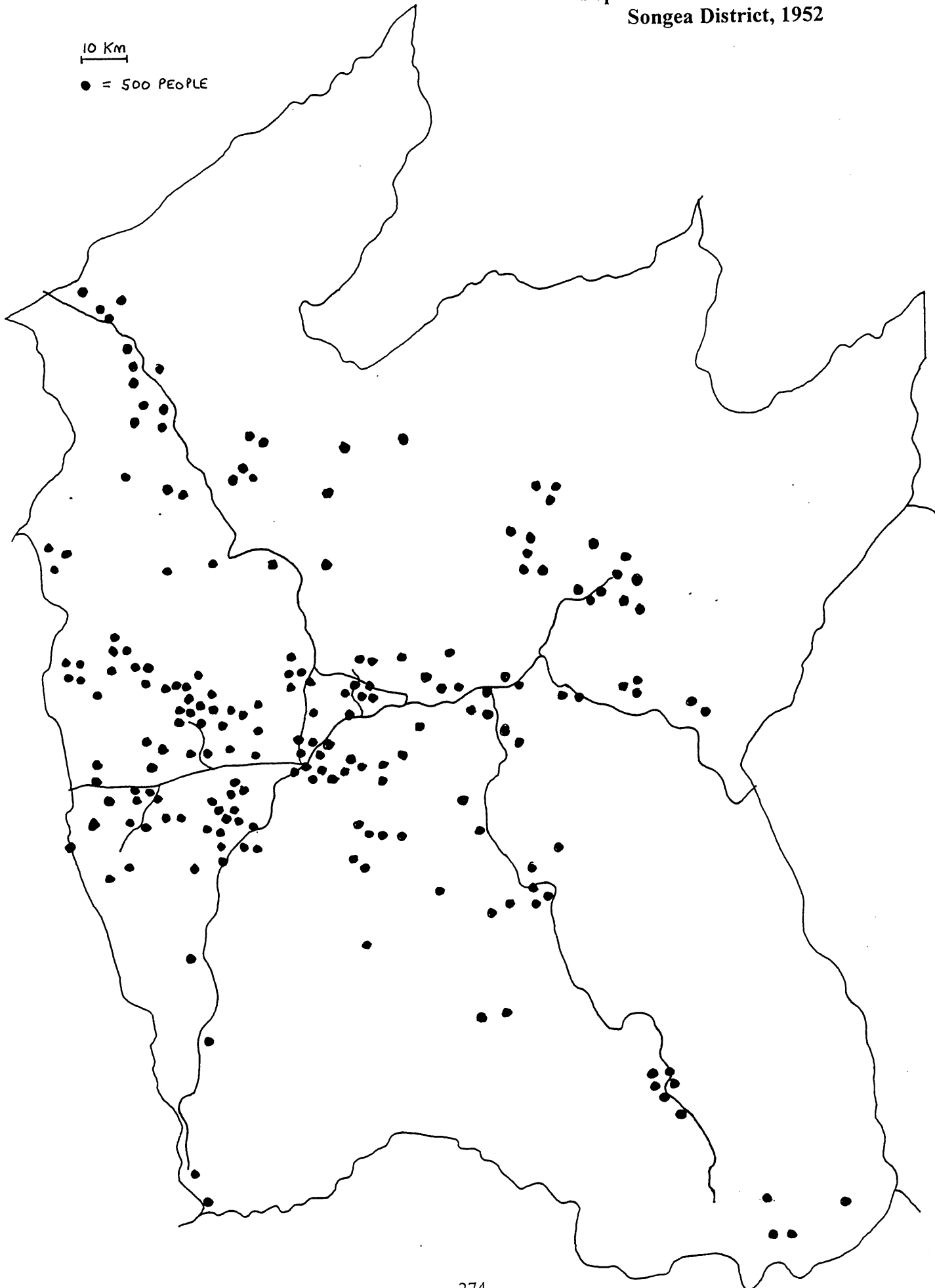
MAP 4
Native Authorities in Songea District, 1930-1953



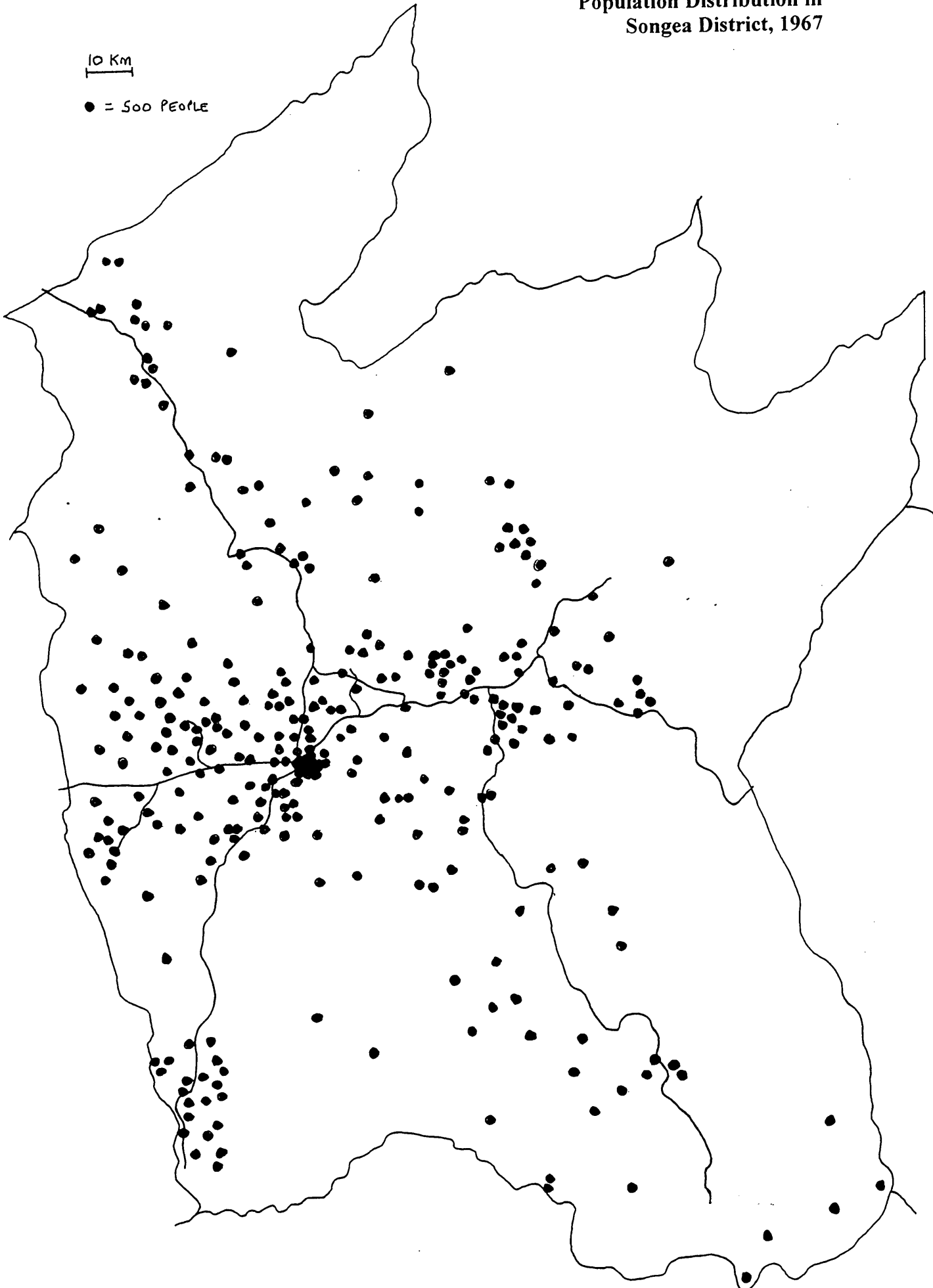
MAP 5
Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1935



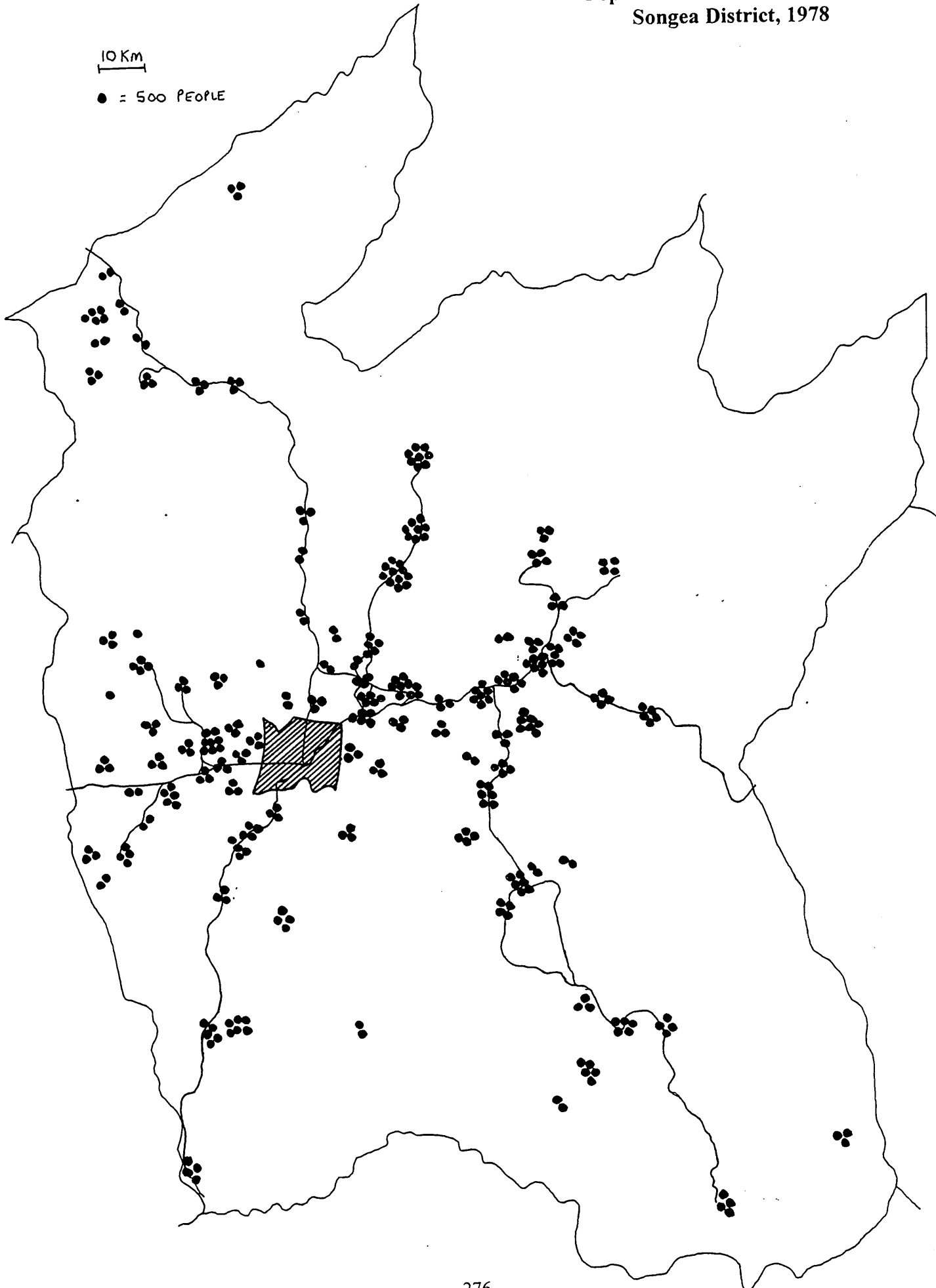
MAP 6
Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1952



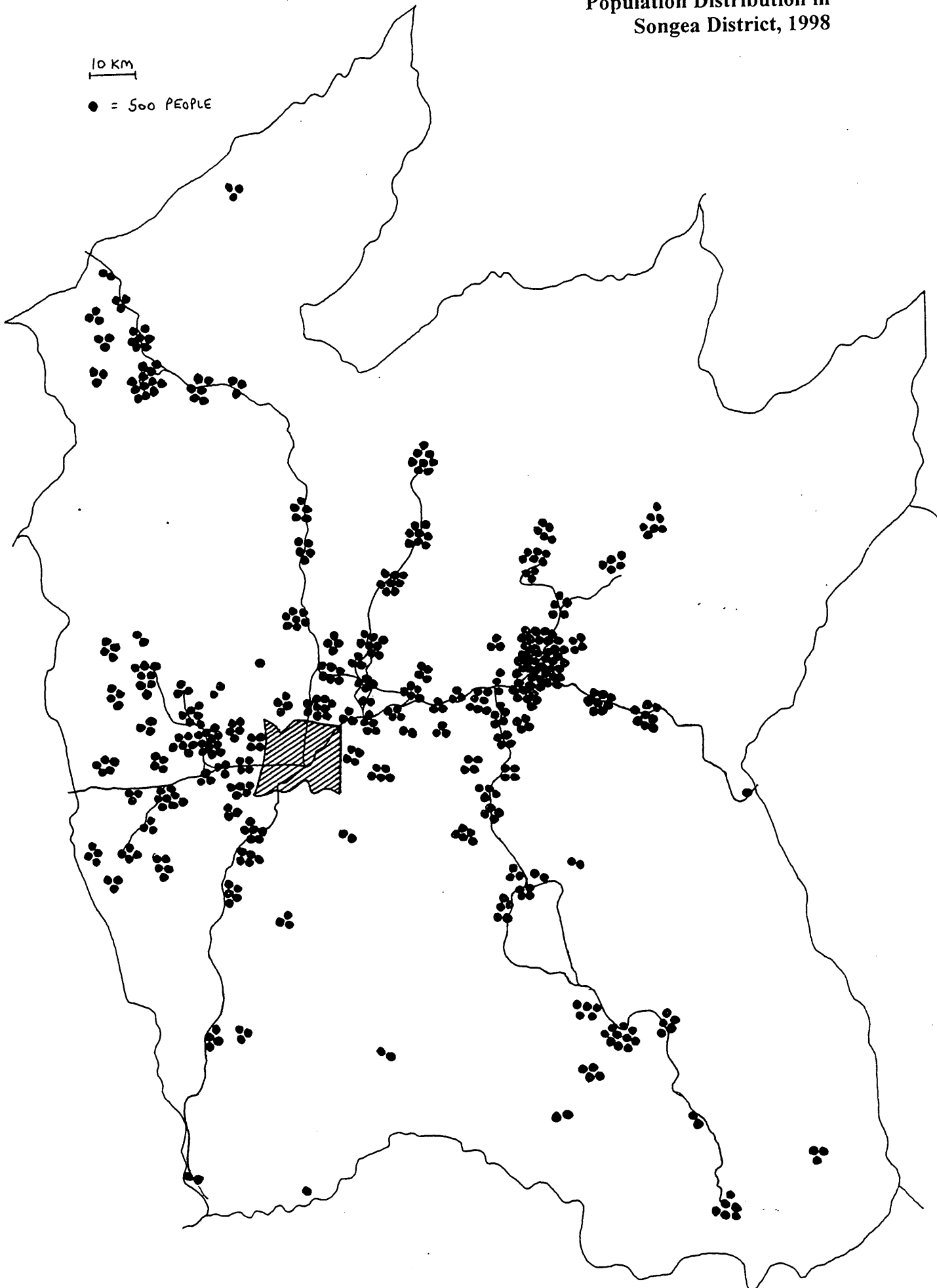
MAP 7
Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1967



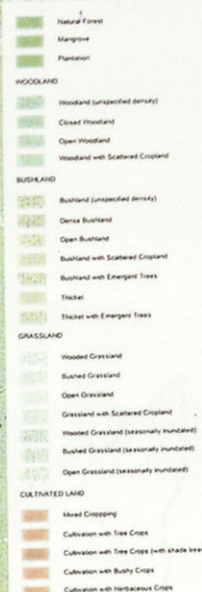
MAP 8
Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1978



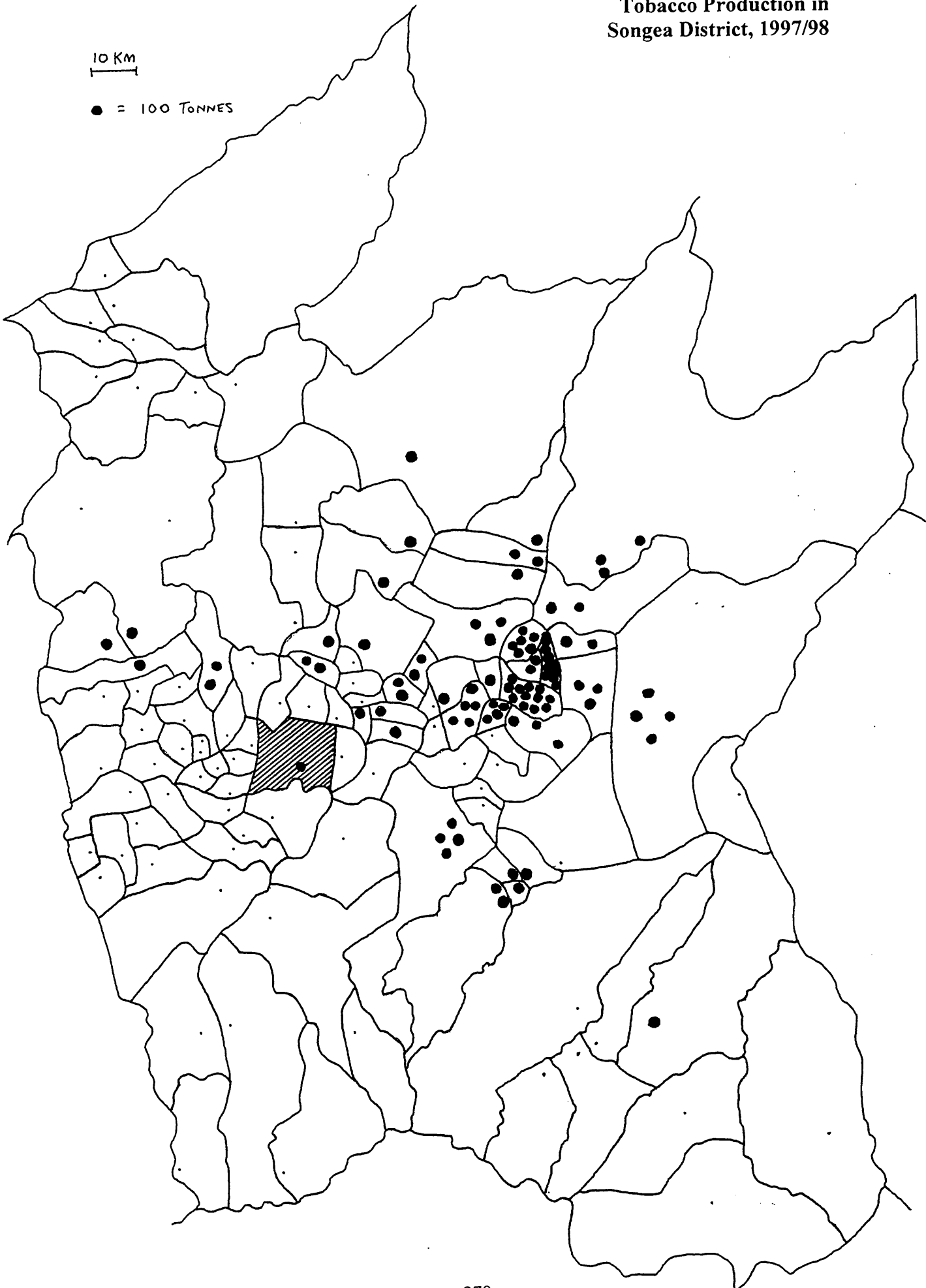
MAP 9
Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1998



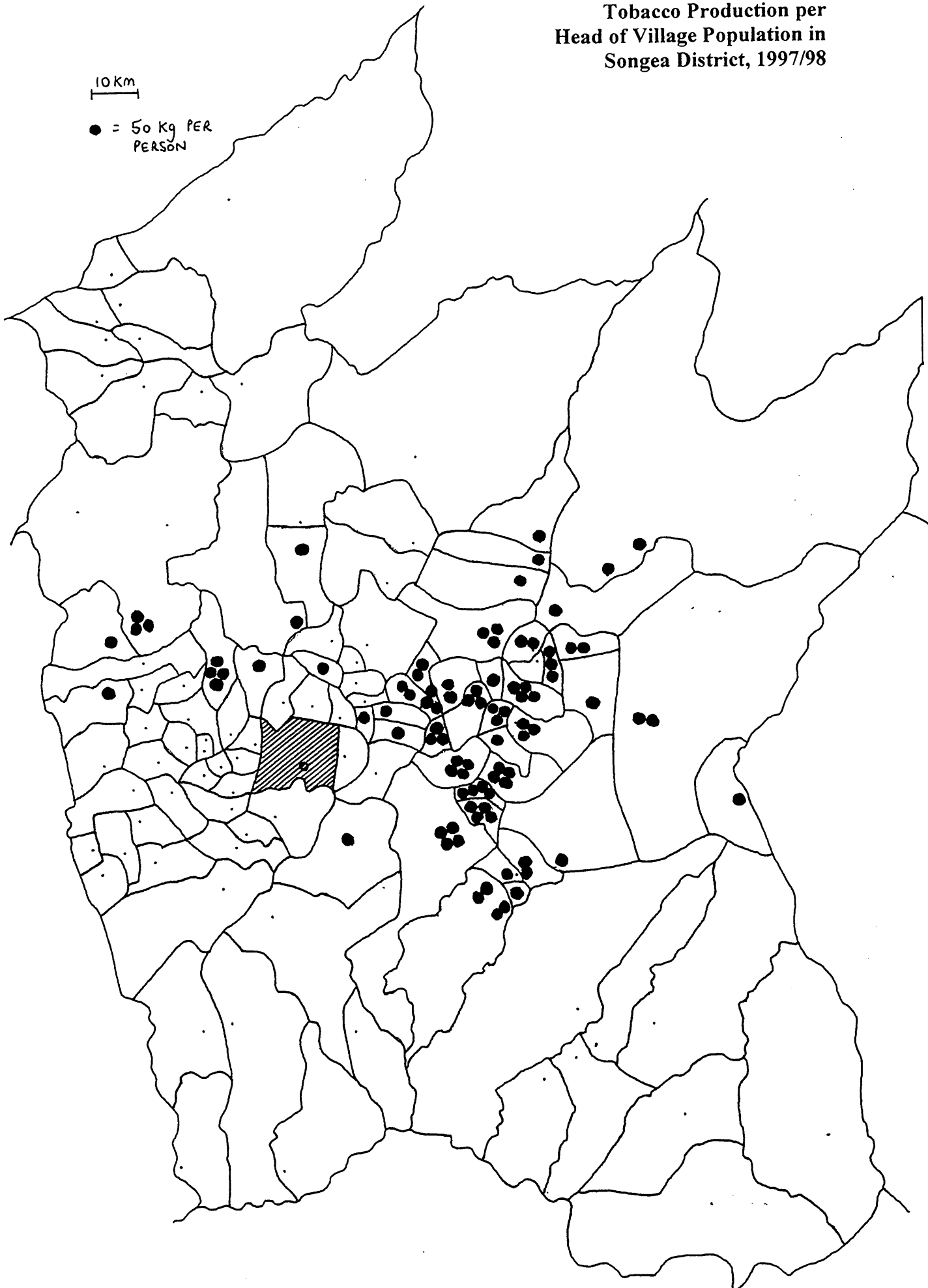
Land Cover and Village Boundaries in Songea District, 1996



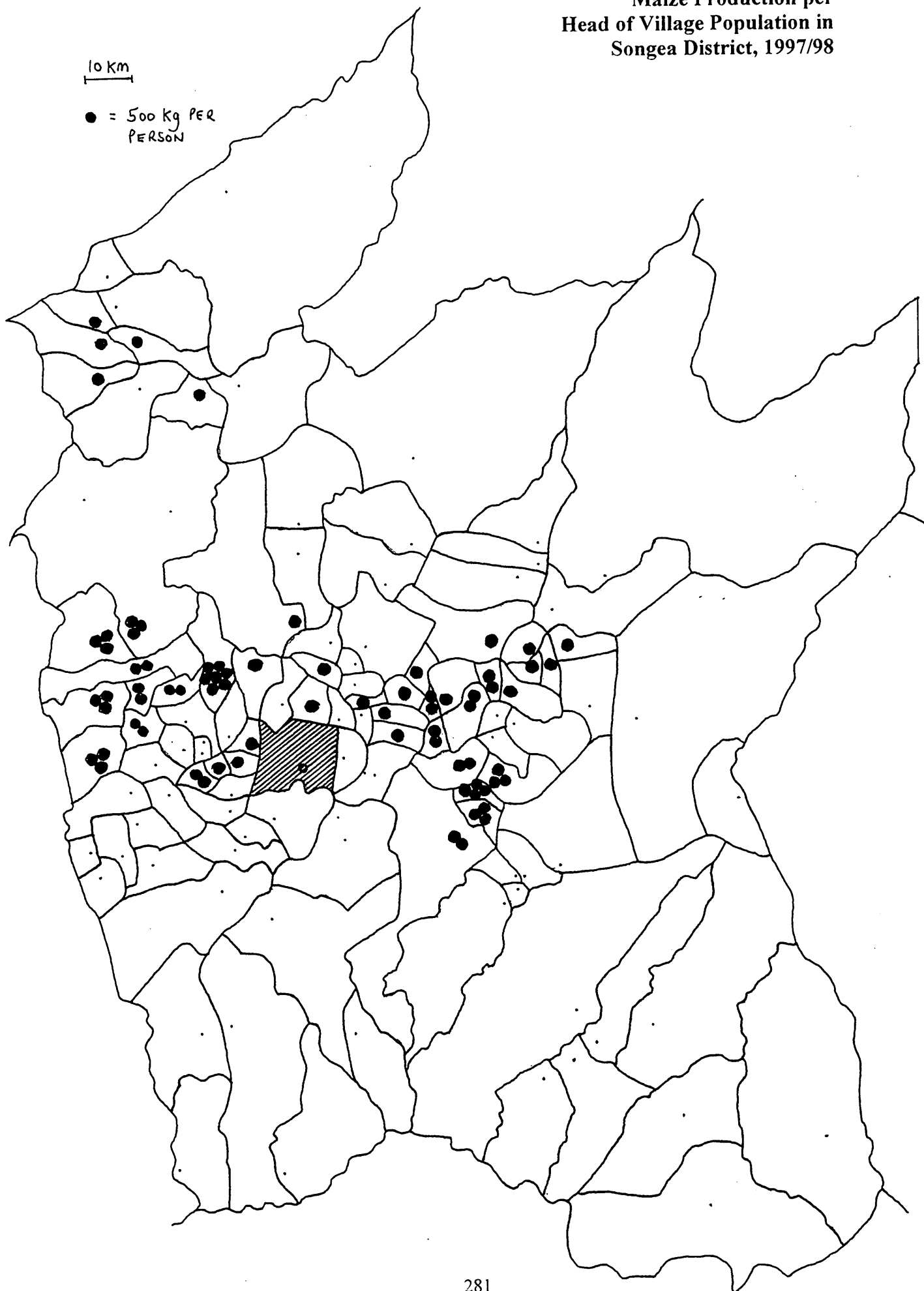
MAP 11
Tobacco Production in
Songea District, 1997/98



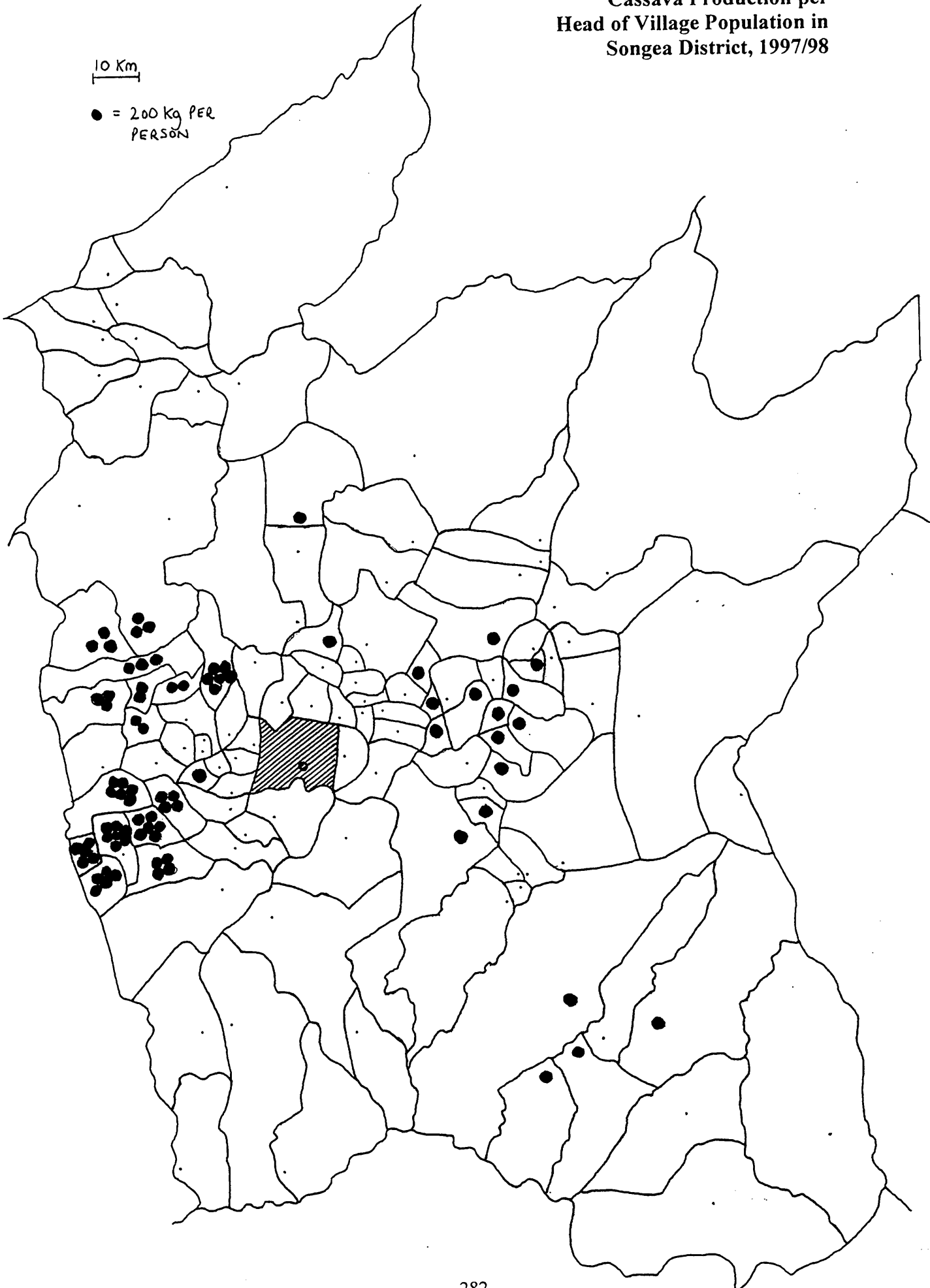
MAP 12
Tobacco Production per
Head of Village Population in
Songea District, 1997/98



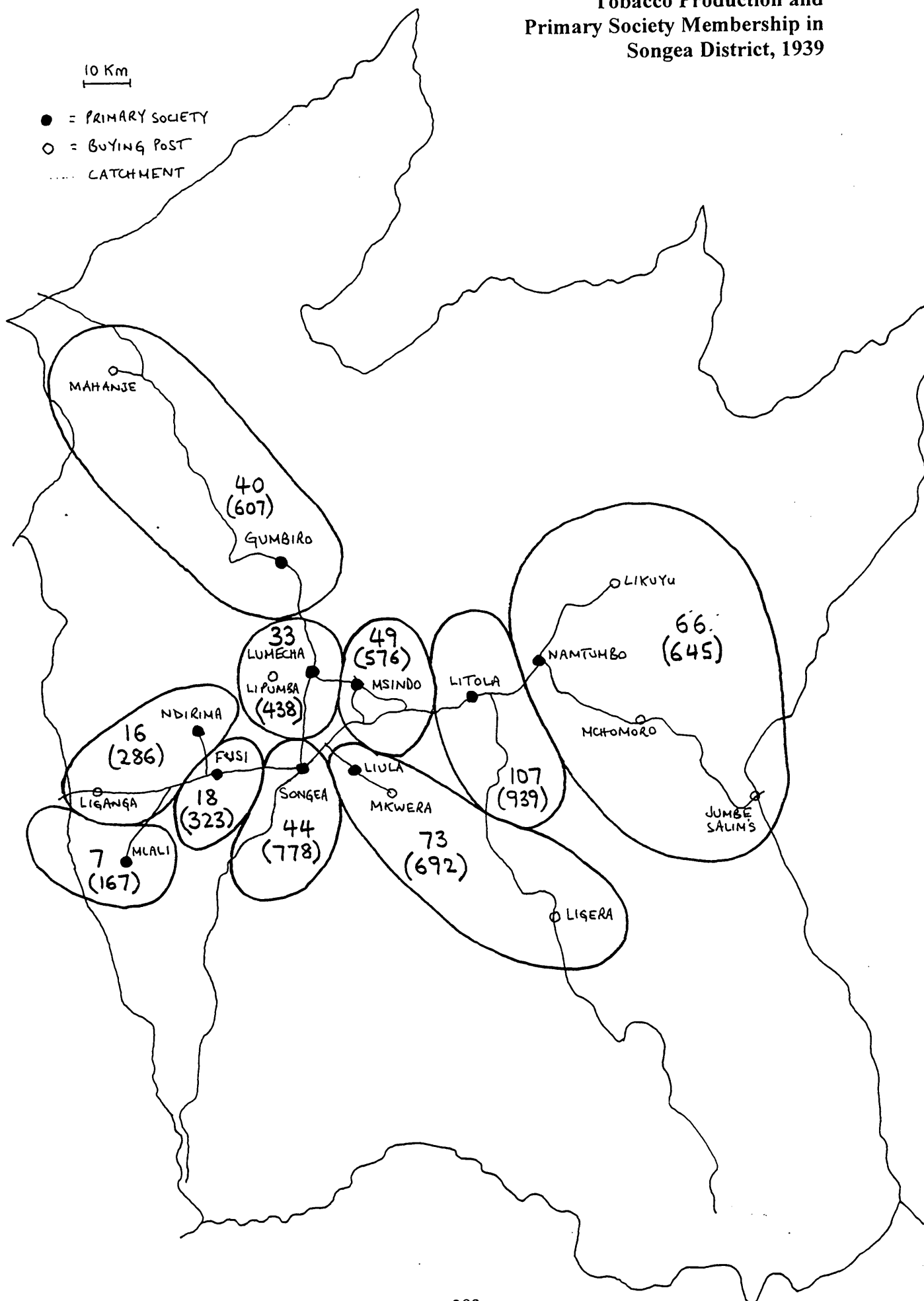
MAP 13
Maize Production per
Head of Village Population in
Songea District, 1997/98



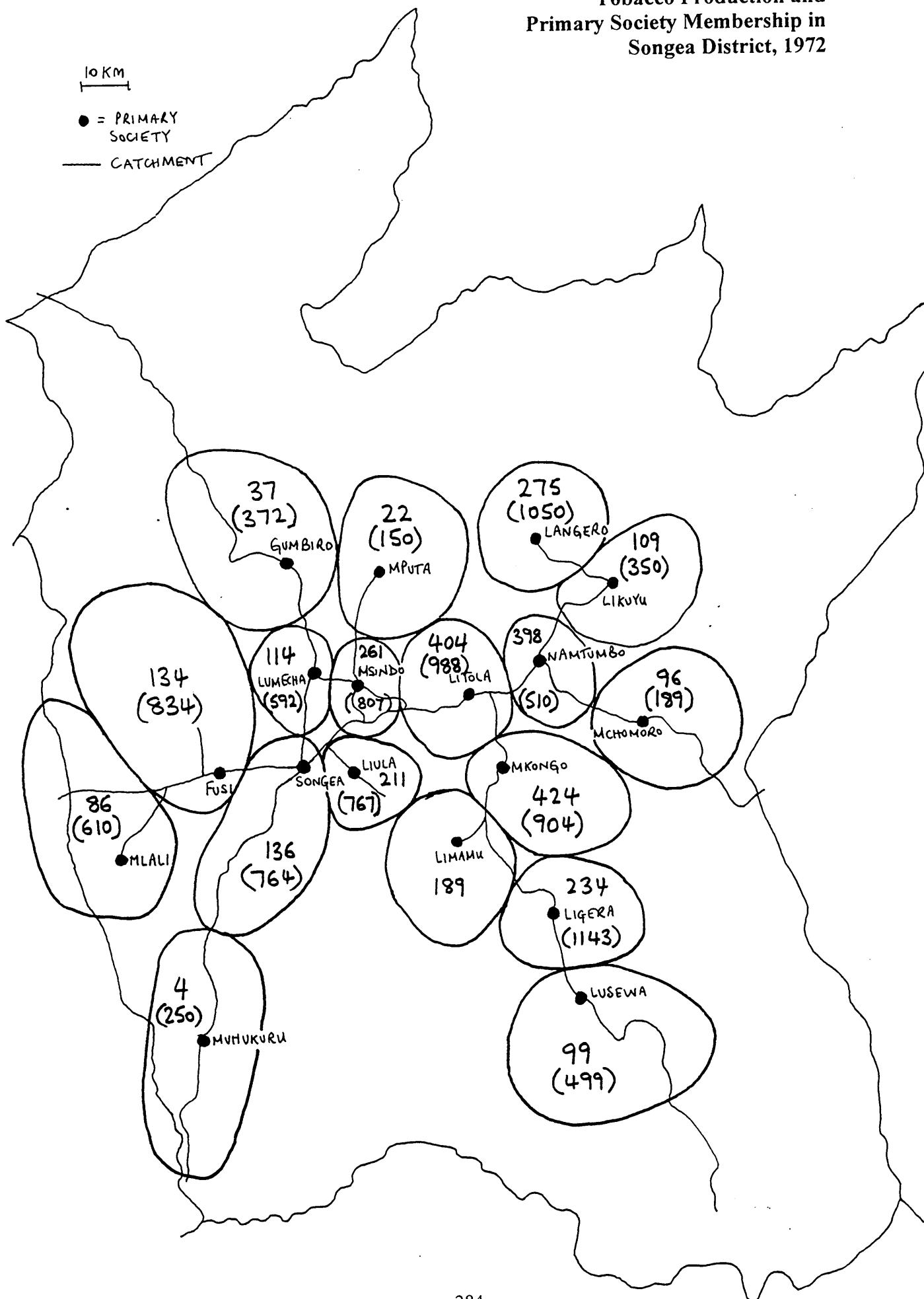
MAP 14
Cassava Production per
Head of Village Population in
Songea District, 1997/98



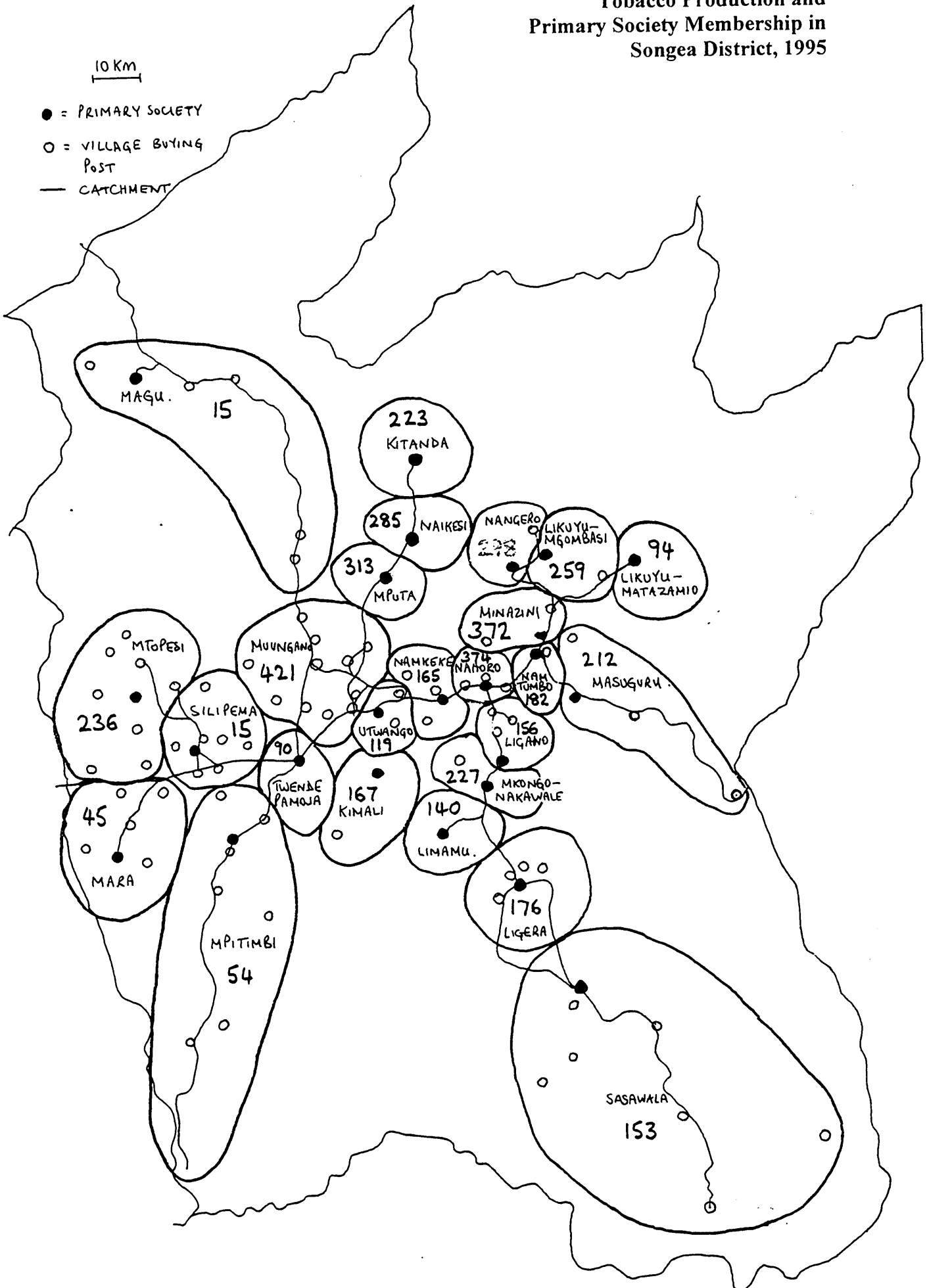
MAP 15
Tobacco Production and
Primary Society Membership in
Songea District, 1939



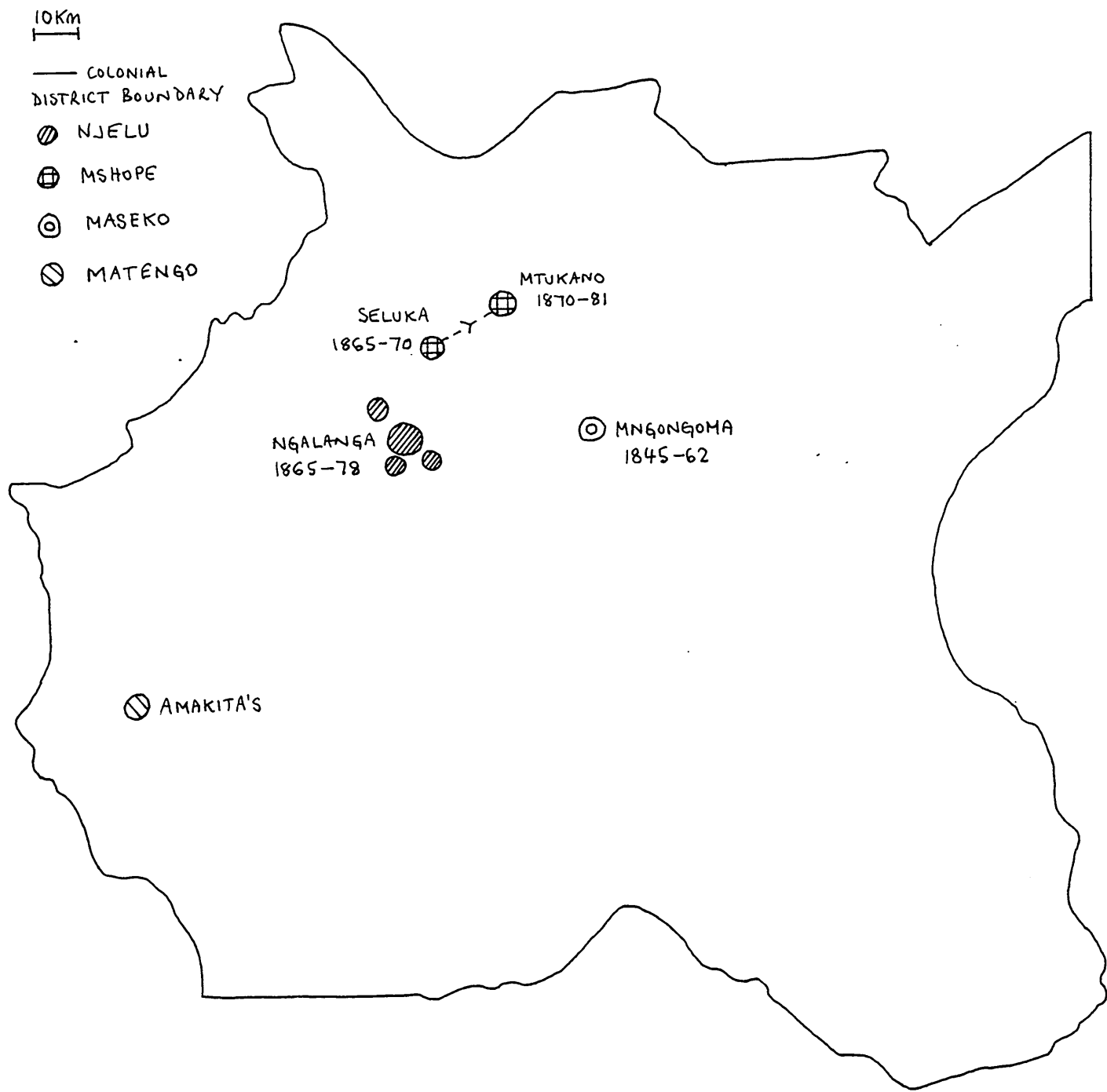
MAP 16
Tobacco Production and
Primary Society Membership in
Songea District, 1972



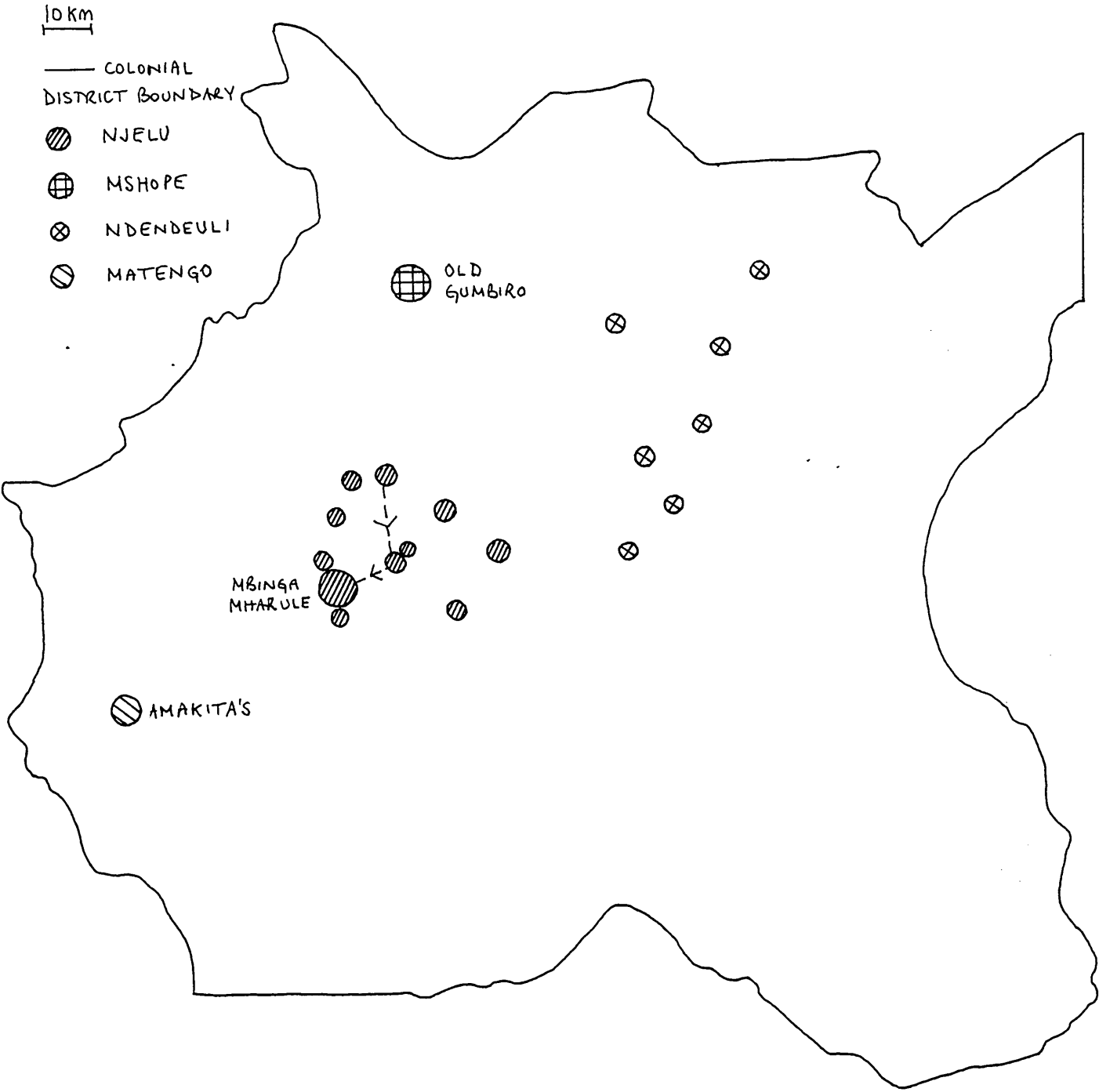
MAP 17
Tobacco Production and
Primary Society Membership in
Songea District, 1995



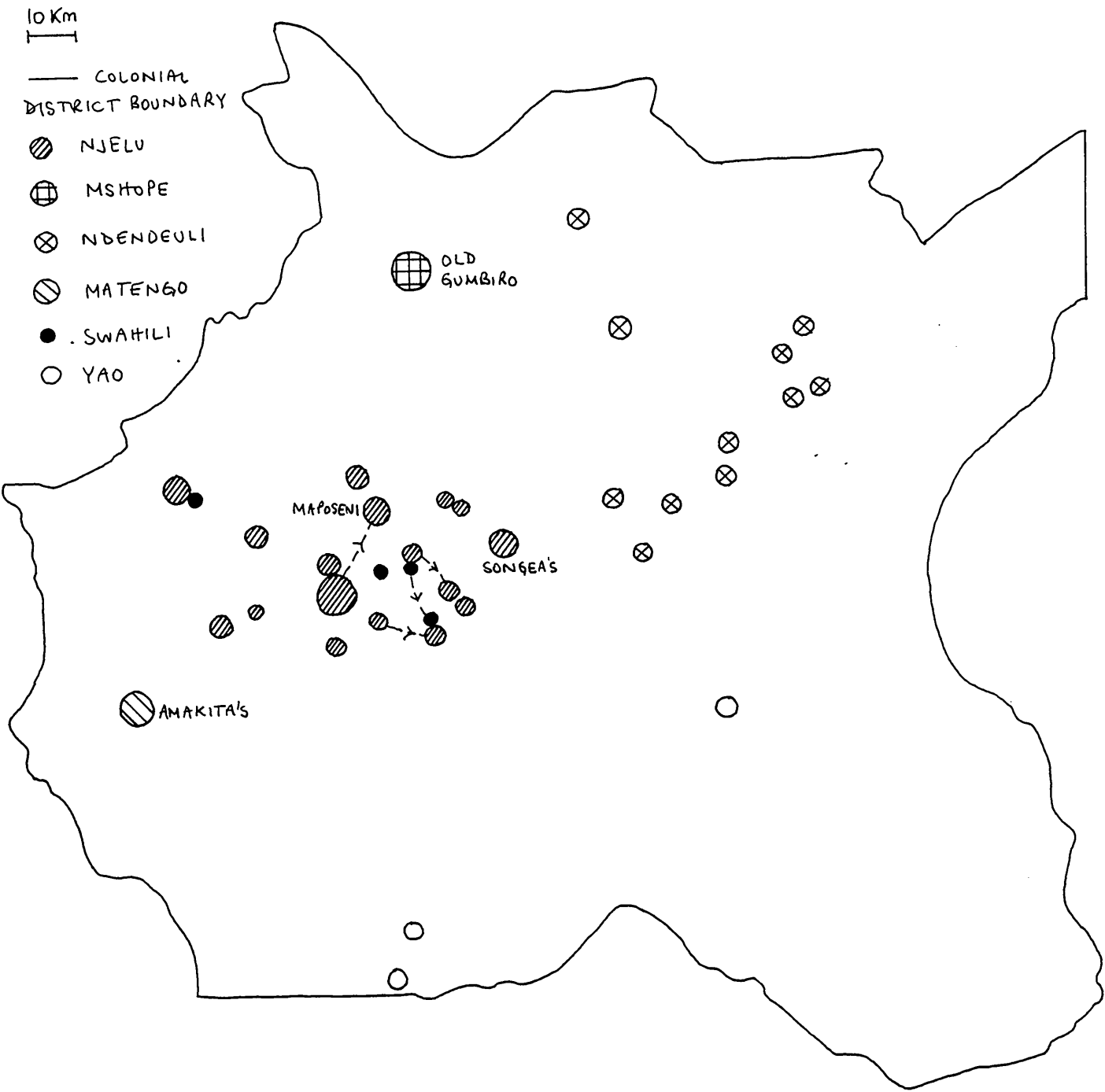
MAP 18
Settlements in Ungoni, 1845-1880



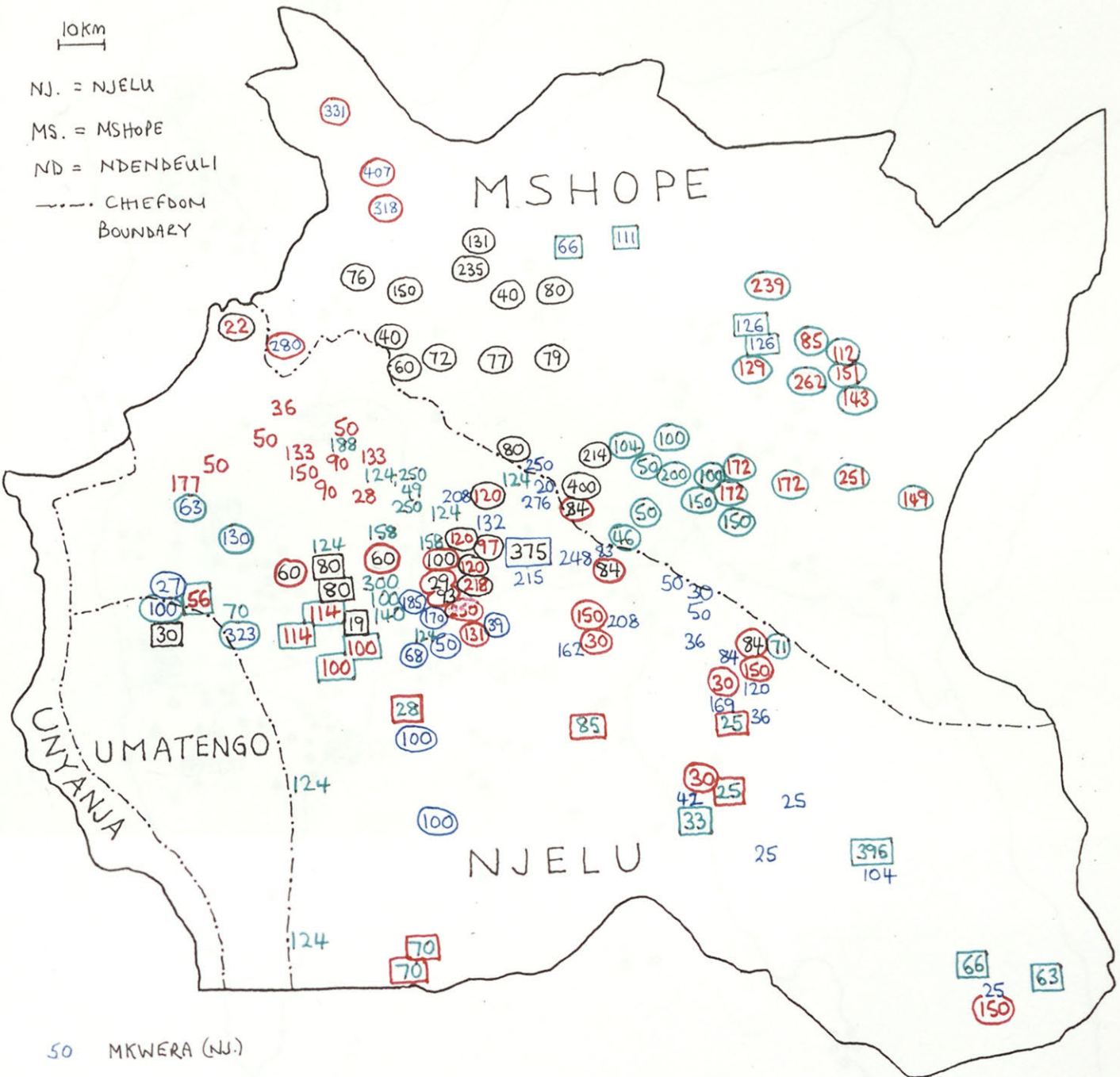
MAP 19
Settlements in Ungoni, 1880-1890



MAP 20
Settlements in Ungoni, 1890-1905

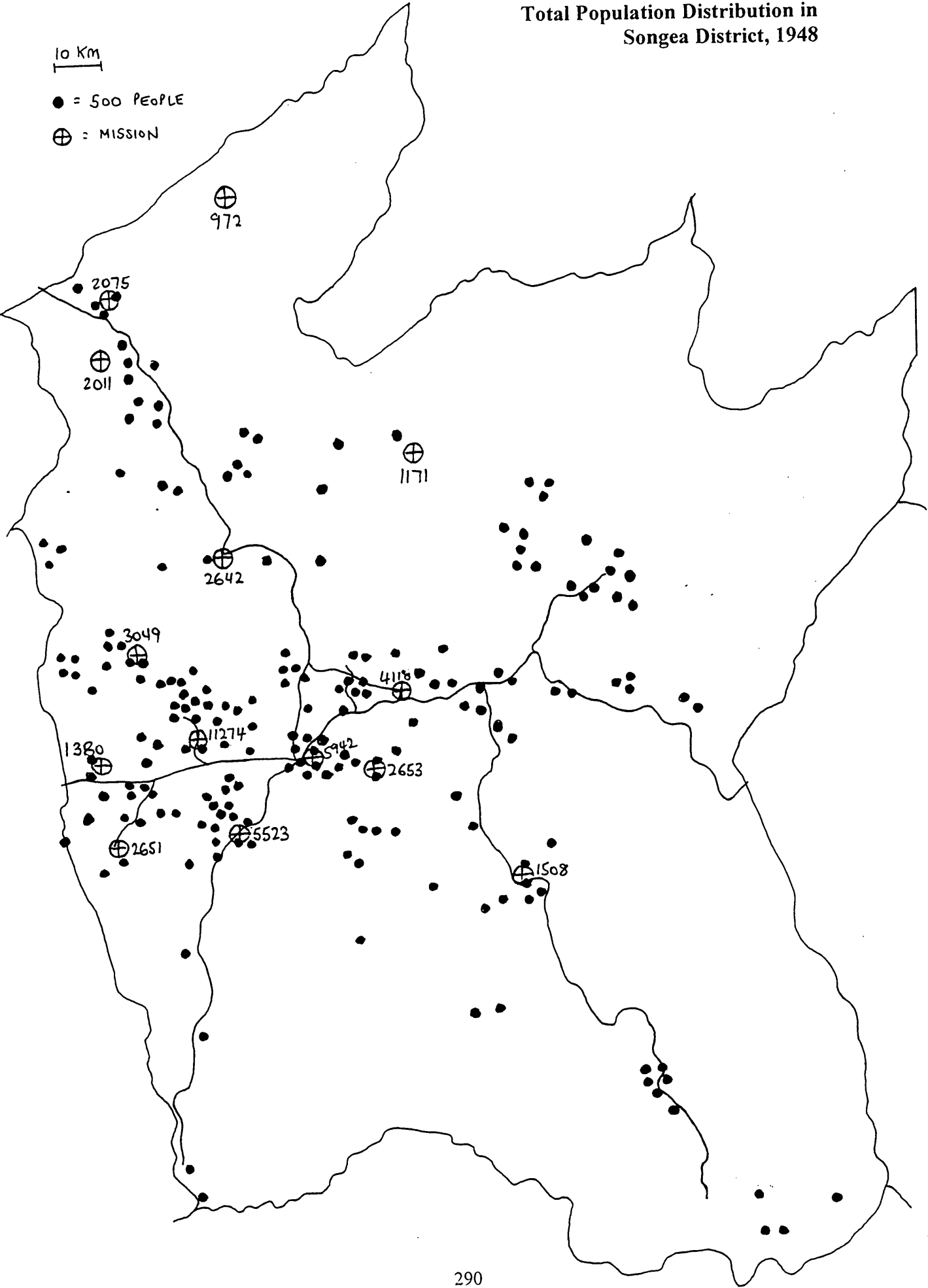


MAP 21
Ndunates and Taxpayers in
Ungoni and Undendeuli, 1954

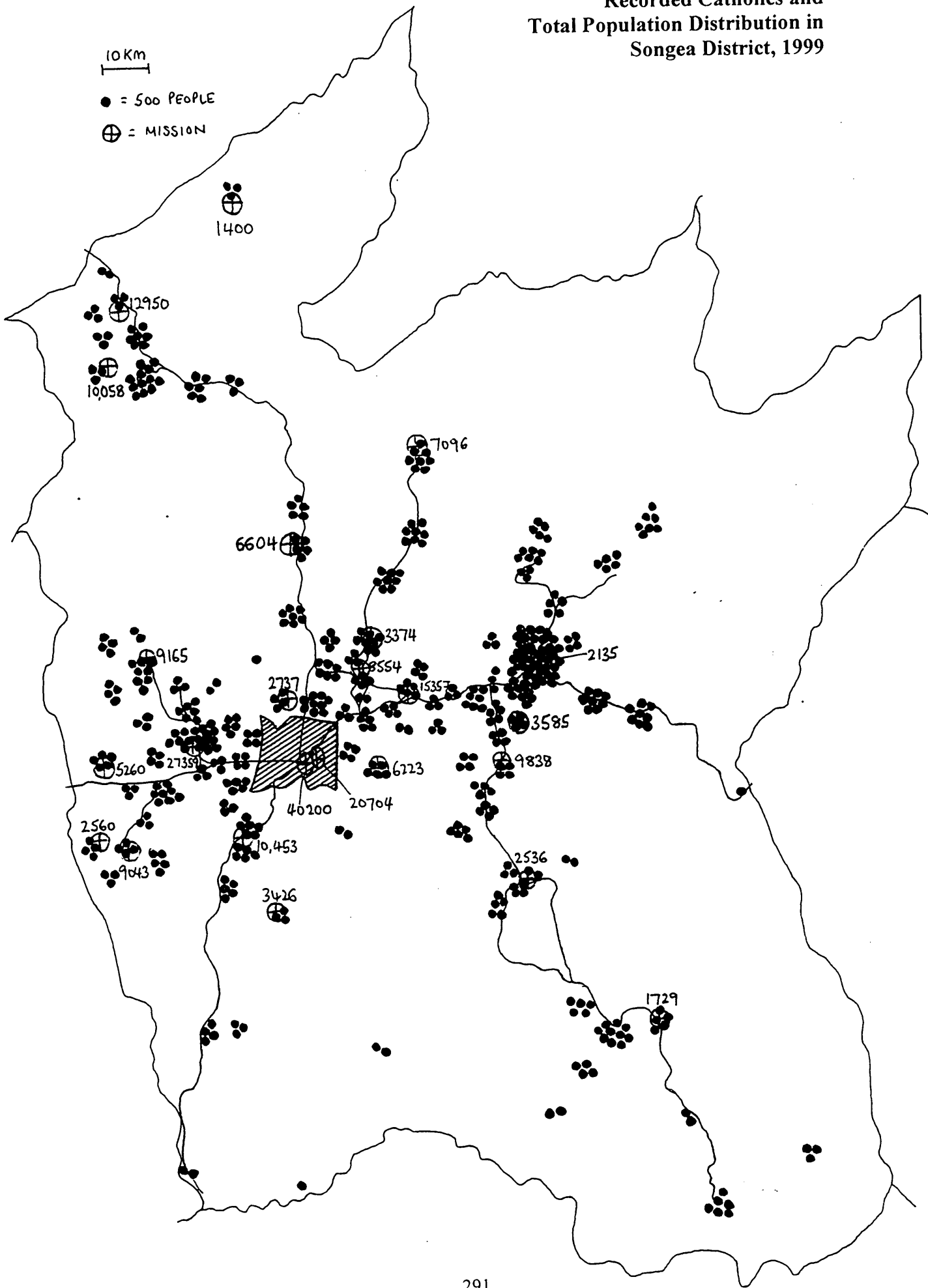


- | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------------|----|------------------|----|-------------------|----|---------------|
| 50 | MKWERA (NJ.) | 50 | LIYANGWENI (NJ.) | 50 | LIGANGA (NJ.) | 50 | MAHANJE (MS.) |
| 50 | MAPOSENI (NJ.) | 50 | MAKORO (NJ.) | 50 | LUSEWA (NJ.YAO) | 50 | LIKUYU (ND.) |
| 50 | MGAZINI (NJ.) | 50 | MPARANYAKI (NJ.) | 50 | MITOMANI (NJ.YAO) | 50 | LUEGU (ND.) |
| 50 | MKURUMUSI (NJ.) | 50 | MARA (NJ.) | 50 | GUMBIRO (MS.) | 50 | MBUNGA (ND.) |
| 50 | MPITIMBI (NJ.) | | | | | | |
| 50 | MAJIMAHUHU (NJ.) | | | | | | |

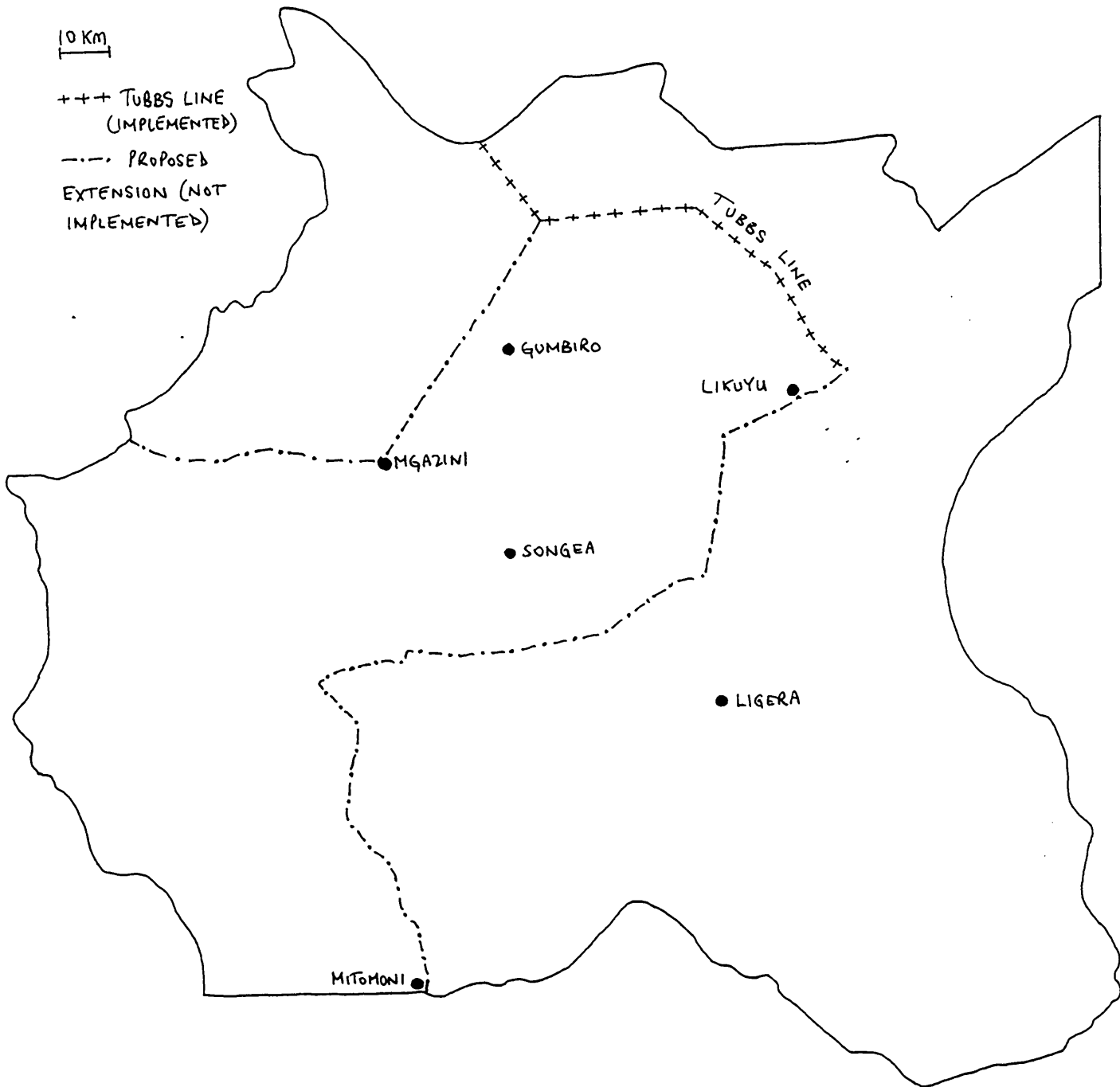
MAP 22
Recorded Catholics and
Total Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1948



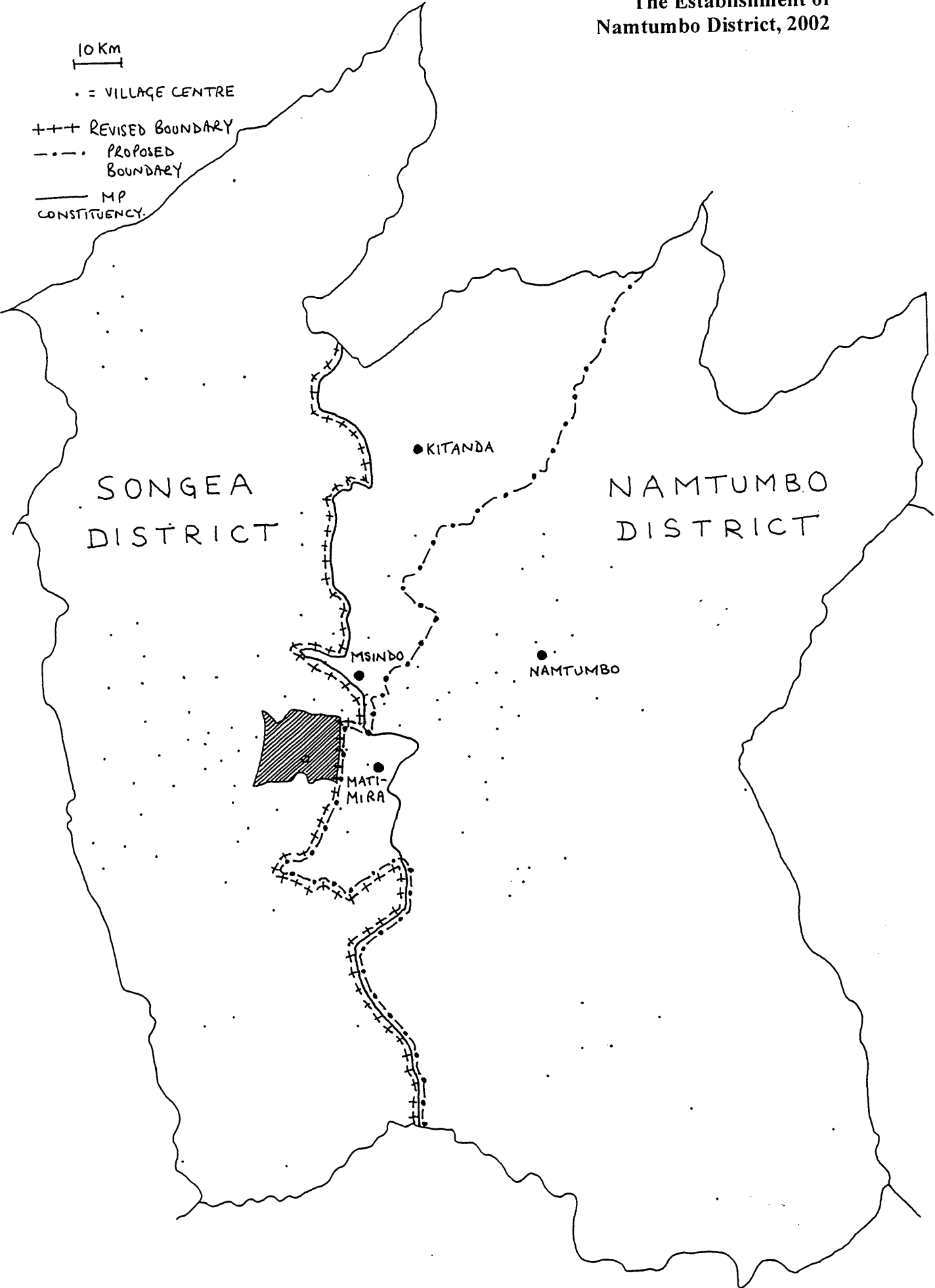
MAP 23
Recorded Catholics and
Total Population Distribution in
Songea District, 1999



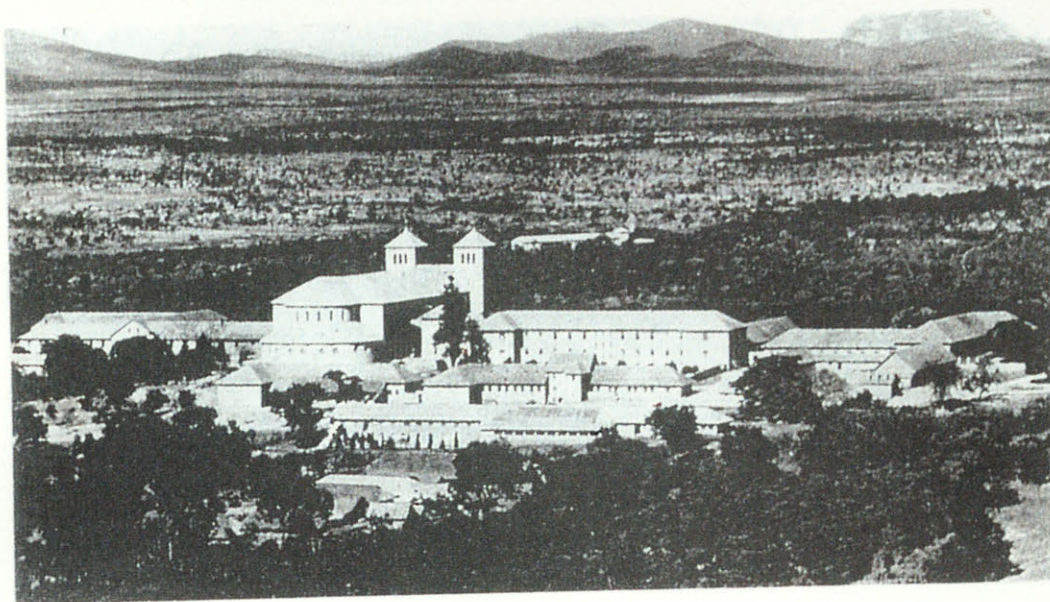
MAP 24
Closer Settlement Scheme and
Proposed Extension in Songea District, 1945



MAP 25
The Establishment of
Namtumbo District, 2002



Images of Stability in Central Njelu



1. Peramiho Mission, 1948



2. Peramiho Mission, circa 1985